



Yours truly,
Wall S. Green

COLUSA COUNTY

CALIFORNIA.

ILLUSTRATIONS

DESCRIPTIVE OF ITS SCENERY,

FINE RESIDENCES, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, MANUFACTORIES, HOTELS,

FARM SCENES,

BUSINESS HOUSES, SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, MINES, MILLS, ETC.

From Original Drawings by Artists of the Highest Ability.

WITH HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE COUNTY.

ELLIOTT & MOORE,
PUBLISHERS.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

1880

INDIANS OF COLUSA COUNTY.

Number, Mode of Life, Government, Marriage,
Dress, Food, Hunting, etc.

TRIBES AND VILLAGES.

While there were many small tribes, or villages, of Indians inhabiting the territory now comprising the county of Colusa, there were three belts, as it were, of them, the tribes in each having more or less intercourse with each other, and being generally on friendly terms. Those occupying either side of the river formed one, those occupying the foot-hills—along Bear valley and Stony creek—another, and those occupying the pine timber region of the mountains the third. Many of these tribes have died out entirely, and their names have passed entirely from the memory of man. Many persons have supposed that each village was a tribe of itself, but most of these were the temporary residences of families of the same tribe, and while all acknowledged the authority of the principal Chief, the government of the villages were largely patriarchial. For example, there were of the "Co'-lus" Indians a number of camps, the names of some of which we can remember, as follows: The Lōch-Lōch, signifying big red-tailed hawk, was at the head of Sycamore slough, and was the lowest down the river of any of the Co-ru, or Co'-lus tribe. The Doc-doc was just below town, and Coo-coo'-a was the next below. Colusa is built on the ruins of Co-ru, the capital of the nation. The Cow'-peck was opposite Colusa, on Colonel Wilkins' farm. The Tāt'-no is now occupied and is on Colonel Hagar's land, some four miles above Colusa. The Si'cope was in the bend of the river east of the Five-mile House. The Cah'-cheal was at the old Seven-mile House. Cah, pronounced with a strong aspiration of the *h* and *a* short is the Indian for antelope. The Si-ee (view) was at the bend at the upper end of Judge Hastings' land, and was so-called because there was no timber to obstruct the view of the plains. The Wy-terre (turn to the north) is now inhabited and is on the upper end of the Jimeno grant. The Cha (aspirate *h* and pronounce *a* very short) was at John Boggs'. The Ket-tec' (Indian for wild wormwood) was at Princeton, and Tu-tu', the upper village of the Co-ru tribe was some two miles above Princeton.

THE COLUS TRIBE.

"Co'-lus" was not the exact pronunciation of the word, as given by the Indians. It was nearer "Co-ru'," with as much of a rolling sound of the *r* as it is possible to give it. We were

told, many years ago, by very intelligent Indians, that this word originally meant "scratch," and that the Indians were so named from the propensity of the young squaws to scratch the faces of the bridegrooms, on the occasion of the consummation of marriage. Yuba, the "captain" of the Wy-terre, and about the most intelligent Indian now remaining, says, however, that "Co-re'" (same rolling sound of the *r*, and sharp hissing aspiration of the *e*) is scratch, and that Co-ru was simply the name of a tribe, without any meaning. We are inclined, however, to the first theory. All Indian names had a significance once, and the pronunciation of the word meaning scratch was probably gradually changed, as must happen with all unwritten languages. As they were early called "Colus" by the whites, the Indians themselves dropping into using that name, and hence we always speak of them as the Colus Indians.

The river Indians were, of course, the first to come in contact with American civilization. The largest and most noted tribe of them were the Cólus, with the principal rancheria, or village, where the town of Colusa is now located. As the writer came to Colusa in 1850, and has seen them gradually die out to a small handful, we shall have more to say of that tribe than any other. The Colus Indian, however, was a perfect type of both the river and foot-hill Indian, so that if we shall succeed in giving the reader an idea of these, he will see all the others.

NUMBER—BOUNDARY—GOVERNMENT.

There were, perhaps, a thousand or more of the Colus Indians in 1850. The territory of the Colus tribe extended from the head of Sycamore slough to some point above Princeton—probably some of the large sloughs up that way making the boundary. On the east it extended to Butte creek, and on the west to the center of the plains. There were bounds set to foraging territory between tribes and villages, and, we think, for families. The Willows, a bunch of elders on P. S. Perdue's land, near Maxwell, and some other marks about midway of the plains, formed the boundary between the river and the hill Indians. Certain sloughs marked the boundary between villages and families of the river Indians. The form of government was an absolute monarchy, and Sioc, a man of quick perception, and a remarkably strong intellect, for an entirely untutored savage, was the ruler.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS.

The climate being mild, they had never conceived the idea of a dress of any kind; even the traditional fig-leaves our first parents improvised, when they had learned good from evil, being entirely wanting with the male portion of them. The squaws hung a fringe of small cords, made of wild hemp, from the waist to near the knees. This was called a tunica. These were sometimes worn out until a very few cords sufficed to remind

TRADITION OF A FLOOD.

The Indians had a tradition of a flood. The waters covered the whole face of the earth and drowned every living thing, except a hawk and a mud turtle. These two congenial creatures happened to come together on the same bunch of floating tule. After getting tired of floating around on the bosom of the deep, the hawk tied a cord to the turtle, and the latter made a dive for the bottom. On the first occasion he came up without having reached bottom, but on the second trial he brought up a lot of mud. This was deposited on the tule, and they kept this exercise up—the turtle going down and the hawk pulling it up—until they built the Butte mountains so that the top emerged from the water. On this spot of ground a bunch of elders sprung up, and out of pieces of them the hawk and the turtle, or one of them, made a couple of Indians, male and female, and they populated the mountains and the valleys. We leave it to scientists to say which was the most difficult feat, building the Buttes on a bunch of tule with mud taken from under it, or making Indians out of elders. We hope, however, that no scientist will undertake to upset this tradition by showing up anything inconsistent about it.

MODE OF BURIAL.

When an Indian died, or, as some say, was about to die, he was wrapped up with twine into a round ball, his head being thrust down between his legs, until a corpse prepared for burial looked for all the world like a large ball of twine. A lot of acorns and other food were always thrown in to last him on his journey to the other world. If a woman died who had a child not large enough to gather its own acorns, it was always buried alive with its mother. After burial, the females of the family danced around in a little circle, stopping about once a minute to give vent to a mournful wail. This was kept up for about twenty-four hours. The Indians were strong believers in ghosts, and were much afraid of them. The mourners would put ashes on their heads, and cover their faces with tar; and they brought pitch-pine from the mountains for the purpose of making the tar, which they used for nothing else. When an Indian departed he had to run west, to where the sky came down to the ground, and if he escaped the coyotes he was all right, but the coyote was the embodiment of the spirit of evil, and if he captured the poor digger he was in a bad fix. It was a principle to try to forget the dead, and the name of one deceased was always spoken in a whisper. If one should meet an Indian and ask him about one who was dead, he would whisper almost inaudibly "loo'-mas"—dead.

POINTS OF THE COMPASS.

When one asked an Indian where he was going, he would

invariably point with his lips, by pouting them out and turning his head in the desired direction—and then repeat the point of the compass, an idea of which they had very correctly. They could name eight points—wy-ell, north; wur-ell, south; pwe-ell, east; no-mell, west; pwe-wa-rie, northeast; no-wa-rie, northwest; pwe-wur-rie, southeast, and no-wur-rie, southwest. The *a* in *wa* is sounded as in *bah*. It may seem somewhat strange that while the Indians could never pronounce the *r* as in road, run, etc.—invariably saying "load," "lun,"—they had many words with the rolling sound of that letter, that is, it is the nearest we can come to conveying an idea of the sound on paper. Most of the Indians of the valley, and even the mountains as far north as Red Bluff, named the points of the compass with a good deal of sameness. The points of the compass of the Mem-pon-ways, who inhabited the territory between Stony creek and Tehama, were as follows: Wy-hi, north; no-a-hi, south; pwe-hi, east, and num-hi, west. Higher up on Stony creek, near the foot of the high mountains, there was a ranche-ria called Wy'-a-muck, another No'-a-muck, and still another Pwe'-a-muck. Mem (water), is another word which seemed to be common to all.

"SIOC," CHIEF OF THE COLUS.

Sioc, the Chief of the "Colus," was in many respects a remarkable man. He said when the whites first began to settle in the valley, that the Indians were doomed, but he did not know how to avoid it. He was full six feet high, straight as an arrow, and he was "every inch a king." He always carried a spear, the staff of which was about six feet long, with an arrow-head, some four inches long, made of glass. We suppose originally that these were made of flint. This was the insignia of his office. When, in 1851, the Indian Agent brought some three wild Spanish cattle from Sterling's ranch, and wanted to hold a parley with the Indians, Sioc did not see the point the agent was driving at. He did not know, perhaps, how much those wild bullocks cost the United States. After the Indians had devoured the beef—which did not take long—Sioc rose and made them a speech. No Indian stirred from the position he held when the old man arose. Standing before them, perfectly naked, with no attempt at ornament about him, and with the staff in one hand, his every motion and every intonation of voice was one of eloquence. He warned them of the vices of the white man. He did not believe that the agent came with any commission from the great American "Sec-too" (Chief), for all he was doing or saying was mere boy's play. The white man was encroaching on their territory, and debauching the people, but he knew no remedy. His position was isolated. There were great numbers of the whites, and they could come in on all sides, and with great guns, and destroy them; hence they must seek his friendship, although that in the end might lead to destruction. He acknowledged the approach of a crisis, and

deplored his inability to control the course of events. We then knew enough of the language to catch the drift of his speech.

For several months after we came to Colusa, the women and children would all run for the brush on the approach of a white man, but one day when we went across the river to the rancharia, Sioc made them all keep their places, but they set up a terrible yell. We went up to where Sioc, his squaw, and a child some six months old, were sitting. To please the old man, we started to take the baby, but the mother gave an unearthly yell and grabbed it. Sioc took it from her and gave it to us. The child held out its little hands to come, which pleased Sioc very much, but the poor mother sank to the ground and trembled from head to foot, as though she expected the child to be eaten before her eyes. After the town began to grow, in the fall of 1851, Sioc became very much depressed in spirits, and stayed most of the time at the rancharia. We remember one occasion, after we had not seen him for months, he came across and met us on the street in front of the Colusa House, and was so glad to see us that he threw his arms around our neck, and gave a hearty embrace. He then told us that his people were all going to the bad; that his authority was broken; that his women were no longer virtuous, and that he was sick, and would not live long. His squaw, the mother of the baby that had come to see us so readily, was dead, and he asked us to see to the child, when he was gone—all his other children had died. He died in 1852, broken-hearted. After his death the Indians knew no restraint, and indulging in all sorts of vices, died off very rapidly. We paid a squaw for caring for the child, until Dr. Semple's family came to Colusa, in 1853, when they took her to raise.

THE CORTINAS, OR WY-COWS.

The Indians that inhabit the country along Cortina creek have always—even in 1850—been called by the name of that stream, but Wy-cow is the proper name. It seems some of these Indians had visited Napa before the discovery of gold, and had picked up a few Spanish phrases, and tried to ape Spanish manners. It also appears that it was considered a good hiding place for horse thieves at an early date, and these Spanish horse thieves probably gave the creek its name. Jot was the Chief of the Wy-cows contemporaneous with Sioc, and the two were fast friends. Jot was the ruler over a number of villages along the foot-hills, but we do not know the boundaries of his territory. It could not have been north of Freshwater creek, we think, because the yimies (paths) of the Colus made in visiting the mountains all led to points south of that. The Wy-cows seemed to be the only Coast mountain Indians with whom the Colus held friendly intercourse. The Stony creek mountain Indians belonged to the Nome Lacke tribe, and further back in the mountains they were called Nome Cult.

FEW INDIANS REMAINING.

There are but few Indians left in the county—perhaps not half as many as there were of the Colus in 1849. Some of the men have taken somewhat to work, and a few of them make tolerable harvest hands. The Cortinas, or more properly the Wy-cows, in the foot-hills on Cortina creek, have tried to do more in an agricultural way than any others, and tried to hold a small tract of land, but there seemed to be no law for it and they are entirely homeless—that is, what they have is by sufferance only. It is so, too, with the remnant of the Colus. Colonel George Hagar permits them to live upon his land, and as long as he lives or owns the land, they will probably have a home; but in another decade there will not, in all probability, be enough left to require a rancharia."

INDIANS DESTROYED BY PLAGUE.

Col. J. J. Warner, at present residing in Los Angeles, was one of the Ewing Young party, who, while on a trapping expedition, passed up through the Sacramento valley in 1832, and returned in 1833. His description of the Indians is as follows:—

"The banks of the Sacramento river, in its whole course through its valley, were studded with Indian villages, the houses of which, in the spring, during the day-time, were red with the salmon the aborigines were curing. At this time there were not, upon the San Joaquin or Sacramento rivers, or any one of their tributaries, nor within the valleys of the two rivers, any inhabitants but Indians. At the mouth of Kings river we encountered the first and only village of the stricken race that we had seen after entering the great valley; this village contained a large number of Indians, temporarily stopping at that place. We were encamped near the village one night only, and, during that time, the death angel, passing over the camping-ground of these plague-stricken fugitives, waved his wand, summoning from the little remnant of a once numerous people, a score of victims, to muster to the land of the *Manitou*; and the cries of the dying, mingled with the wails of the bereaved, made the night hideous, in that veritable valley of death.

"On our return, late in the summer of 1833, we found the valleys depopulated. From the head of the Sacramento, to the great bend and slough of the San Joaquin, we did not see more than six or eight live Indians, while large numbers of their skulls and dead bodies were to be seen under almost every shade tree, near water, where the uninhabited and deserted villages had been converted into graveyards; and, on the San Joaquin river, in the immediate neighborhood of the larger class of villages, we found not only many graves, but the vestiges of a funeral pyre."

entering that stream seven miles below the northeast corner of the county. Indian creek, the most easterly branch of Stony creek, heads about due west of the town of Colusa, and an almost imperceptible elevation divides its waters from those of Bear creek.

STONY CREEK.

This stream drains the entire eastern slope of the Coast Range for about fifty miles, and, consequently, carries off an immense deal of water during the rainy season. It does not run into the valley, however, in the summer, but is swallowed up by the immense beds of gravel that forms its bed. It is from an eighth to a quarter of a mile wide, and its banks twelve to fifteen feet high. Before it enters the Sacramento valley proper, it has formed but few rich valleys. It is so rapid that its deposits have been principally boulders and sand. Near its mouth, however, it has formed some of the richest land in the world. No creek empties directly into the river between Stony creek and the bay.

The small streams that have their rise in the low mountains or hills run easterly into the plains and empty into the "trough" described further on. Most of them contain living water in the foot-hills, and the water of a few extends a short distance into the plains, but they are generally dry in the plains except during a wet winter, when an avalanche of water is sent down into the trough and the tules below. Each creek has formed a ridge for itself, with an elevation of from five to ten feet above the lowest land between them, the height of the ridge gradually descending as they approach the "trough."

THE SACRAMENTO RIVER.

This beautiful stream, as yet uninjured by the hydraulic miner, is the pride of every resident of the valley. So far as the transportation question is concerned, it is our Legislature, our Railroad Commission, our everything. As no body or company can monopolize it, it regulates with unerring precision the whole question of freights—not only upon the river, but upon the two lines of railroad running up either side of the Sacramento valley. The river forms the eastern boundary of the county for eighteen or nineteen miles, runs through the county for about twenty-four miles—in a straight line—and again forms the eastern boundary to the lower end. The general course of the river from the upper to the lower end of the county is a little east of south—making twelve miles of easting to sixty miles of southing. It is navigable all the year round to the upper end of the county, and from the town of Colusa—twenty-two miles above the south boundary of the county—steamers tow barges carrying six and seven hundred tons. Above Colusa three hundred tons is considered a fair load. This being the case, freight from Colusa to San Francisco can only vary between one dollar and two dollars a ton on heavy articles of produce. The fall of the river from the upper end of the county to the

town of Colusa is from one foot to a foot and a half to the mile, and below that point it is six inches and less. As a consequence of this the upper river has more rapids and bars, and it also washes its banks and changes its position more, thereby washing in trees which, unless cleared out, impede navigation. The average width of the river down to its junction with the Feather is about three hundred feet, and the height of the banks at low water is about twenty-three feet.

THE "TROUGH," AND BASIN.

Stony creek enters the river seven miles below the north boundary, and about six miles below that the natural overflow of the river bank runs back from the river into a "trough," and from that point to its mouth the river runs on a ridge like the Mississippi. The land falls gradually back from the river for three or four miles, and then very gradually rises to the foot-hills. It is the same on both sides, except that on the east side Butte creek, a living stream and the eastern boundary of the county, runs down the bottom of the "trough," until, at the lower end of that portion of the county on the east side of the river, it loses itself in the tules. The average width of the "trough" on the west side of the river, into which the river overflows and the streams from the foot-hills run in winter, is about two miles, from its head as above given, for about twenty-five miles. The trough then widens out into a regular tule. The *tule* land of the county consisted of a strip in this trough averaging about six miles wide and eighteen miles long, from the lower end of the county north, and of about 15,000 acres on Butte creek, at the lower end of the county, on the east side of the river. Numerous sloughs run out of the river, during floods, either way into this trough. Those on the east side run back into Butte creek and fill up the tules of Sutter county. The Feather river, putting in to the Sacramento on the east side and also having high banks, makes a basin. There is also a point of high land running from the foot-hills clear on down to the river at Knight's Landing, in Yolo county, some fifteen miles below the Colusa line, thus cutting the western trough in two and also forming a basin. These basins form immense reservoirs for the reception of the floods. When the flood continues for a very long while, however, the reservoirs get full and the water rushes with more force to the river below, and over the banks of the river on either side below the points above mentioned. The soil of these overflowed lands are exceedingly fertile, and much money has been spent in attempted reclamation, a history of which will be given further on.

KINDS OF TIMBER.

The river is skirted on either side with a growth of timber, averaging a mile in width, principally oaks, interspersed with sycamore, cottonwood, willow, and ash. Much of this along

the lower end of the county has been cut off and sold in the shape of cordwood—supplying the steamers on the river and the city of Sacramento; some of it, in fact, going to San Francisco. This timber is not used for building purposes. Some of the low hills are covered with a kind of post oak and digger pine while the others are bald. Along the Coast Range there is much very fine pine timber, but as yet there has been but little of it used—lumber of the same kind being more accessible in the mountains on the east side of the valley. In fact most of our building and fencing lumber comes from Puget Sound by way of San Francisco.

WATER SUPPLY.

People in the valley, away from the river, have to depend upon wells for water. The average depth of wells is, perhaps, about twenty feet. All along the river lands water is found in the wells when a level of the water in the river is reached. The depth on the plains varies somewhat with the localities, but in over nine-tenths of the county it is reached in from ten to twenty feet. There is one place extending along the foot-hills from Arbuckle to Dunigan where it is from seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five feet to water, and it is not perceptibly higher than other lands along the foot-hills. This district has a queer geological formation. In digging wells there it is no uncommon thing to find bones and timber at a depth of seventy-five or a hundred feet. One man took up most of the skeleton of a deer, and another found chunks and coals lying around as though a camp-fire had just been extinguished. Very good water can be had by digging almost all over the valley, but in many districts the surface water is strongly impregnated with alkali; but bored wells are both cheaper and better, and are now in general use. In the alkali district very good water is nearly always had by boring down sixty to one hundred feet, and either putting down a galvanized iron casing to keep the surface water out or extending the suction pipe below the bad water. There are springs of water all through the foot-hills, but many settlers there get the water they use from wells. Stony creek and two or three other smaller streams, offer opportunities for water-power, but at present these places are out of the line of trade, and have not been utilized to any great extent.

CHARACTER OF THE SOIL.

The land between the river and the "trough," of which we have spoken, has been formed by the washings of the river, and is called "river land;" that between the "trough" and the foot-hills, formed, in most part, by the streams running from the foot-hills into the valley, is called "plain land," and from thence to the mountains proper, "foot-hill lands." To fully appreciate the fertility of the soil of the Sacramento valley one must have

seen it in its wild state, as we saw it in 1850. All along the river, the timber lands were covered with pea-vine ten or twelve feet high, and the open lands with wild oats from four to seven feet high, varied with an occasional patch of clover so matted and thick that one could scarcely travel through it. The soil, as we have said, was made by the sediment of the river, in which there is a great deal of vegetable matter. The soil of the plains is more varied in character. The creeks that we have mentioned as rising in the low hills and running out into the plains, have each formed a ridge and runs above the land on each side. Thus a person traveling parallel with the river would encounter a succession of rises and depressions. These vary from five to perhaps twenty feet in height. Generally along and near these creeks the soil is of a rich sandy loam. Between these, the lower land is generally composed more of clay, and is colder and harder. In fact, sometimes basins have been formed by these creeks throwing up ridges to run upon, so that the water could not run off freely, and it caused the land to become close and packed, and the water drawing all the alkaline matter from the land and then evaporating, caused the land to become crusted with alkali, and to become entirely unproductive. This occurs, however, only in spots, and forty square miles would perhaps have embraced it all at any time, but the alkali spots are now fast disappearing. In fact, the very worst of it has been plowed up and sowed to wheat in the last year or so. When we get within about fifteen miles of the northern line of the county we meet with more or less rolling land, upon which bunch grass grew in a wild state, and which was classed as too poor for cultivation until the last five or six years, but it is now considered very fine wheat land. The valleys in the hills are all very fine agricultural land, and in the last few years it has been discovered that the hills themselves produce excellent wheat.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE.

The average summer heat—taking the hottest part of each day—is about 90 degrees of Fahrenheit. The average temperature in winter is about 60 degrees. The extreme heat is about 115 degrees, the extreme cold in the valley 29 degrees above zero. It is very seldom that ice is formed, and never over half an inch in thickness. Snow has fallen twice since 1849 to the depth of one foot in the valley. The mountains are covered with snow every winter. The effect of the heat is so different from that of the Eastern States, that after a residence of twenty years in Colusa, we happened to be in Springfield, Illinois, in the month of June, when the thermometer marked 90 degrees, and the heat became so intolerably oppressive that we started at once for the Sacramento valley. The summit of the coast mountains is said to have the best climate for invalids in the world, and every summer hundreds of people flock thither and camp out.

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RECLAMATION IN COLUSA COUNTY.

First Attempts, The "Trough," Reclamation Districts, Swamp Lands, Park's Dam, Sloughs, etc.

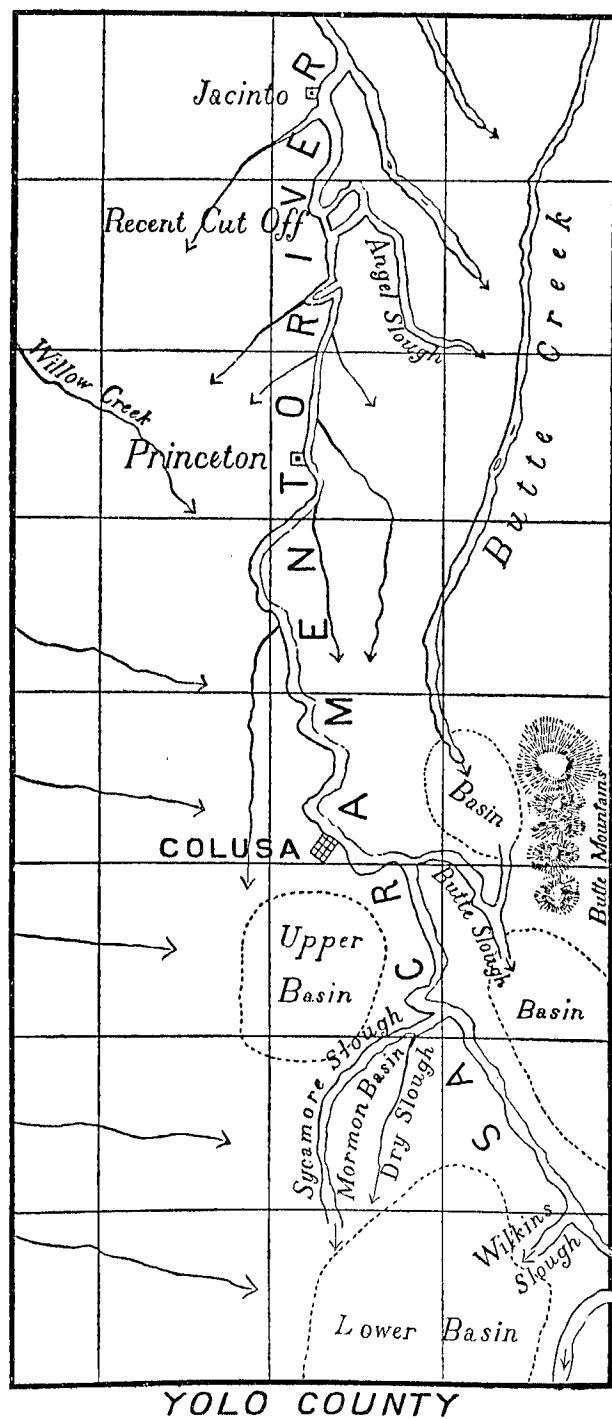
THE WEST SIDE.

As we have stated in a preceding article, the Sacramento river, below Jacinto runs on a ridge, and the overflow, either through sloughs or crevasses, or over the banks, finds its way back from two to five miles where the slope of the valley down from the mountains meets the slope from the river, and forms at the upper end a "trough" and at the lower end a "basin." There is a regular fall to this upper "trough" so that the water passes off, the greater portion of it, as soon as it quits running into it. The water from the foot-hills, as we have seen, also runs into this trough. Two miles south of the town of Colusa the trough widens out and the fall ceases for some four miles and there is a basin covering some sixteen square miles of the very finest land in the world on which *tule* formerly grew. Sycamore slough putting out of the river six miles below Colusa, runs in a south-westerly direction for some six miles turns then to the south and in five miles more is lost in the *tules* of the lower basin. As the slough forms for itself a ridge it cuts the basin in two leaving a narrow passage to the west for the overflow from above to pass down the valley. The reader will understand now that there is a small basin above Sycamore slough and a much larger one into which it empties, lying between that and Knight's Landing; the major portion of which is in Yolo county. To afford a better understanding of the subject matter we have drawn the accompanying skeleton map of the river and the various sloughs putting out of it, together with those crossing into the trough from the foot-hills, showing the several basins the reclamation of which have been attempted.

THE MORMON BASIN.

The first effort at reclamation, to speak of, was made by the owners of land in what is known as the Mormon Basin about the year 1867. This basin lies between Sycamore and Dry sloughs. The latter, as will be seen by the above sketch, runs out of the river a short distance below its head and comes near it again in about eight miles, forming the chord to the arc described by the Sycamore. As all sloughs form for themselves ridges it must follow that there is a basin between these two. The high land along each slough being settled first, and mostly fenced, there was a common field between them which on this

SKELTON MAP, SHOWING THE NATURAL OVERFLOW OF FLOOD WATERS OF THE SACRAMENTO RIVER, AND THE MOUNTAIN STREAMS EMPTYING INTO "THE TROUGH."



account came to be called the "Mormon basin," and not that any Mormon ever owned a foot of land in it. When the land came to be taken up, the parties saw how easy it would be to keep the water out by leveeing the banks of the sloughs, at the lower ends; for the upper end of each slough was high already—in fact no water has ever run through Dry slough from the upper end since the settlement of the county, except on one or

two occasions when water was run into it by ditches for irrigation purposes. Accordingly a district was organized which was numbered 67, and work was commenced. They have had several breaks in their levees, generally at the lower end, but year after year they have added to them until they feel entirely secure. This is a very fine body of land, and is valued at from fifty to sixty dollars per acre.

RECLAMATION DISTRICT NO. 108.

Between 1855, when the swamp land was first offered for sale by the State, and 1868, when there first began to be any marked demand for farming lands other than those around the bay and principal city, the border of the tules had all been purchased, generally by those owning high lands adjoining, but in 1869 the Sacramento Valley Reclamation Company entered 31,000 acres of land lying in the bottom of the lower basin, most of which was in Yolo county. Louis A. Garnett purchased 6,200 acres more and A. H. Rose some 5,000 acres. The Land Act of March 28, 1868, known as the Green law, having been written and introduced by W. S. Green, then a member of the Assembly from Colusa, provides that owners of land may elect their own trustees and proceed with the reclamation in such manner as they may determine. Under this Act reclamation district No. 108, embracing some 74,000 acres of land, including that of the parties above-named, was organized on the 28th of September, 1870. A. H. Rose, Chas. F. Reed and L. A. Garnett were elected trustees, the former being chosen President. It has continued under the same management ever since except that, in November, 1879, Garnett resigned and R. Cosner took his place. In October, 1870, a contract was let to James M. Lemon to construct a levee from Knight's Landing to the head of Sycamore slough. The contract price was twenty cents a yard and it amounted to \$94,000. Head gates at Knight's Landing and other wood work done that year brought the total up to \$120,000. This work was not all completed until the spring of 1871. The next year—1871—a contract was let to the same party to raise the entire levee at sixteen cents a yard. This amounted to \$60,000. In the fall of 1871, a bulk-head was begun at the head of Sycamore slough but before it was completed, the big storm of December 17 came on, and the district was filled with water—the major portion of it coming, however, from above Colusa. When the water came in on the land, the levee had to be cut at Knight's Landing to let the water back into the river, and the repairs next spring cost some \$6,000. The bulk-head at the head of Sycamore slough cost \$12,000. In December, 1872, the gateway and dam at Knight's Landing again were cut and were repaired while the water was up, at a cost of \$12,000. In the winter of 1873-4, a break occurred near the Harover place, just above Wilkins slough, about seventy feet wide, but it was stopped in about a week. In November, 1874, a

break occurred at Judge Diefendorff's south line, caused by some irrigating culverts. This was stopped, and in January following went out again. It was then fixed while the water was up by driving sheet piling across the crevasse. A bad break occurred also in November, 1874, near Wilkins slough. During the winter of 1875-6 no breaks occurred in the levee, but water came into the district from above. In 1876-7 there were no breaks and no water of any consequence in the basin. The winter of 1877-8 was a disastrous one for the basin. A break occurred at Byer's place, a few miles below the head of Sycamore, and another at the Harover place, which ran all winter. Water rushed down through the sloughs above and a great quantity came from the foot-hills, and the levee had to be cut again at Knight's Landing to let the water out. In 1878-9 there were no breaks, but some water came into the basin from above. In 1879 a large amount of work was done strengthening the whole line of works, but on the first rise two breaks occurred—one a few miles below Wilkins slough and another on the Byer's place. On the 22d of December, 1879, a party of men from the east side of the river claiming that the stopping of Wilkins slough raised the water on their land crossed the river and cut the dam out. The trustees of the district immediately put on a force of men and stopped it, at a cost of about \$3,000. For the first two years of reclamation was the superintending engineer of the works of reclamation, but since October, 1873, R. Cosner has been in the immediate charge of all the work. The total amount spent on this district has been about \$450,000. C. F. Reed, at the lower end of the basin raised a large crop on tule land in 1872-3, but has lost two crops since by reason of the floods. A. H. Rose commenced in Colusa county in 1874, and has lost two crops by floods. A great deal of land has been cultivated around the margins of the basin every year. It is estimated that there are now 20,000 acres of land under cultivation protected by the works above described.

RECLAMATION DISTRICT NO. 124.

In October, 1871, District No. 124 was organized embracing the land in the upper basin, and some of the trough above in all some 14,000 acres, of this amount the Sacramento Valley Reclamation Company owned 5,600. E. A. Harris, M. Stinchfield and A. H. Rose were elected trustees. Contracts were let that fall to James M. Lemon, J. P. Bainbridge and Thos. Lear to build a levee from the head of Sycamore slough to Colusa. This district has built some good levees between Colusa and the Seven Mile house. The total amount expended on river levees has been about \$35,000. Prior to the big overflow of 1878 about half the land in this district was in cultivation. There was some work done just prior to this overflow on the west side of the basin in order to throw the water to the west of it, but it was not substantial enough and washed down.

OTHER WORK ON THE WEST SIDE.

In addition to the work done by the districts above-named, there has been some work done by individuals. So that almost the entire length of the river from the head of the sloughs to Knight's Landing has been leveed. As must be the case with individual efforts there is no uniformity in the levees thus built. Geo. F. Packer set the example for good levees, building his between three and four feet above overflow, and with a good wide base. John Boggs has also built some good levees. The cut-off of a long bend a few miles below Jacinto has had the effect of lowering the high water mark for several miles down, so that land that was low is not now subject to overflow. Dr. Glenn has stopped the big sloughs on his land, and built some levees.

EAST SIDE OF THE RIVER.

As to this side of the river, we make the following extract from a pamphlet recently issued by L. F. Moulton, who owns a large body of land on that side of the river:—

"As both the Feather and Sacramento rivers run on a ridge after they enter the valley, it follows that there must be a basin between them. This basin is bounded on the north by Chico creek, on the east by the foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada mountains and on the south by Feather river, and on the west by the Sacramento. A glance on any tolerably correct map of the State would give you an idea of the situation, even if you had not visited it in person.

"The waters which flow into this basin, and against which we have to contend in the matter of reclamation, are: First: Those of Butte creek and some smaller creeks that head in the mountains above-mentioned and flow directly into the basin; and, Second: The waters escaping during flood time through the sloughs or over the banks, from Chico creek and the two rivers. Butte creek is a tolerably long stream, but its watershed is not great owing to the fact that Feather river runs almost parallel with the course of the mountains, and very near to the valley, leaving but a narrow strip between it and its tributaries and Chico creek. Butte creek runs all summer to a low basin just west of the Butte mountains. The other creeks that run into the basin are all short, and do not run down into the valley except at flood time. All these run into the basin north of the Butte mountains, which are situated about the middle of the basin. The west part of the Buttes are within two and one-half miles of the Sacramento river.

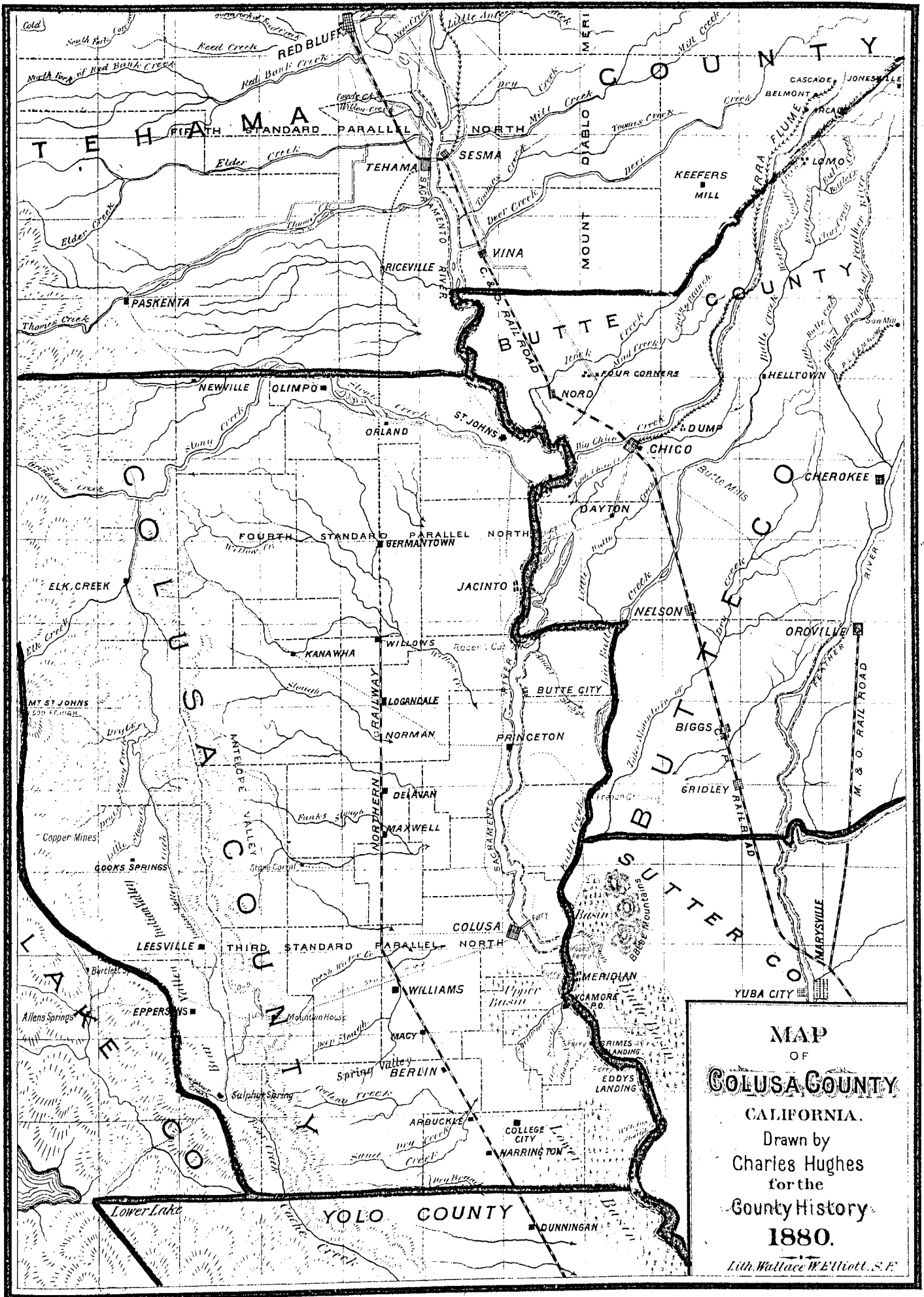
"Butteslough, the largest outlet from the Sacramento river, and which is one hundred and twenty feet wide and about thirty feet deep, makes out from the river immediately west of the Buttes, and runs in a southeasterly course to within about half a mile of the west slope of the mountains, when it turns south and in a few miles is lost in the tules below. This slough has formed for itself a ridge—although not a very high one—and

cuts the basin almost into two. Before there were any levees built anywhere, the flood waters from above washed down between this slough and the Buttes and along over the banks of it into the lower basin. A few years ago Swamp Land District, No. 70, built a levee along the south and west bank of this slough, and this throws the water through the narrow channel between the slough and the mountain. There is a considerable fall—just how much I have not ascertained—between the basin above and the basin below, and hence there is a *very rapid* current at high flood time. It is of this upper basin in which I have some 20,000 acres of land that I am called upon to speak.

"Before there were any levees built, the waters of the Sacramento river escaped through a number of sloughs and over the low bank in places between the mouth of Chico creek, near the north line of township 21, and Butte slough, at the north line of township 15, of the Mount Diablo meridian. Chico creek also overflowed its banks when within about three miles of the river. Butte creek occupies a place at the very bottom of the basin, the land rising either way from it; and hence all the water spilled over the rim of the basin found its way into Butte creek—or rather into the bottom of the basin through which the creek runs, for the creek proper would not begin to hold it. On one occasion the waters of Feather river came across north of the Buttes, and ran into this basin. At that time, however, there was an island on which a large amount of driftwood had lodged that formed a dam in the river, just below the old town of Hamilton, some six miles below Oroville. As the island has been cleared away, I do not apprehend any great danger from that source. * * * *

"It never has, of course, *all* been subject to overflow within the memory of man. I have made surveys enough to determine the fact that Butte creek and the other smaller creeks can be taken into Feather river. Neither would this augment very materially the volume of that stream, for as I have before explained, the watersheds of these streams is small. If the Sacramento was leveed, however, the water thus coming into this upper basin would pass off into the lower one without doing any great damage as it passed along. * * *

"At different times I have had surveys and examinations made by different engineers, on both sides of the Sacramento river from Red Bluff to the bay, but most of my operations have been between Chico creek and Butte slough. On one occasion (October 8 to November 10, 1873) I organized a party of some seven persons, and ran a transit line and chained from junction of Butte creek and Butte slough, up the slough to the river, thence up to Chico creek and up Chico creek to high land, and then examined along the foot-hills with a view of taking Butte and Dry creeks, with the other smaller streams that flow into the basin above described, into Feather river, near Hamilton and thence down Feather river some eight miles, or as far as necessary to levee to prevent the waters of that stream from



MAP
OF
COLUSA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA.
Drawn by
Charles Hughes
for the
County History
1880.
Lith. Wallace W. Elliott, S.F.