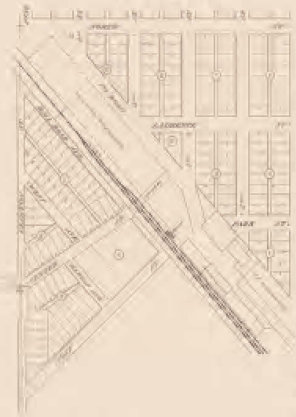


CERES



LEGEND

- School House
- Rail Road
- Highway
- Proposed Railroad
- Drainage
- Water
- Marsh
- Swamp
- Unimproved Land
- Improved Land
- City
- Village
- Hamlet
- Unincorporated Town
- Unincorporated City
- Unincorporated Village
- Unincorporated Hamlet
- Unincorporated Town
- Unincorporated City
- Unincorporated Village
- Unincorporated Hamlet

DATA

THESE MAPS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY
 WERE MADE BY JOSEPH BURTON VASCHE
 IN 1872 AND 1873
 REISSUED BY STANISLAUS LAND & ABSTRACT CO.
 IN 1906

THIS MAP IS A REISSUE OF THE 1872
 MAP OF STANISLAUS COUNTY
 AS THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA HAS
 AUTHORITY TO REISSUE
 THIS MAP AS A PUBLIC
 MAP
 BY
 STANISLAUS LAND & ABSTRACT CO.
 MODESTO, CALIF.
 1906

OFFICIAL

MAP OF THE COUNTY OF

STANISLAUS CALIFORNIA

1906

FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS AND SURVEYS

COMPILED

AND PUBLISHED BY

STANISLAUS LAND & ABSTRACT CO. MODESTO, CAL.

DRAWN BY OSCAR LOTT

NEWMAN



StaniStory: Change and Continuity in Stanislaus County

by Keith Highiet
 and David Seymour

based on the original work
 of Joseph Burton Vasché

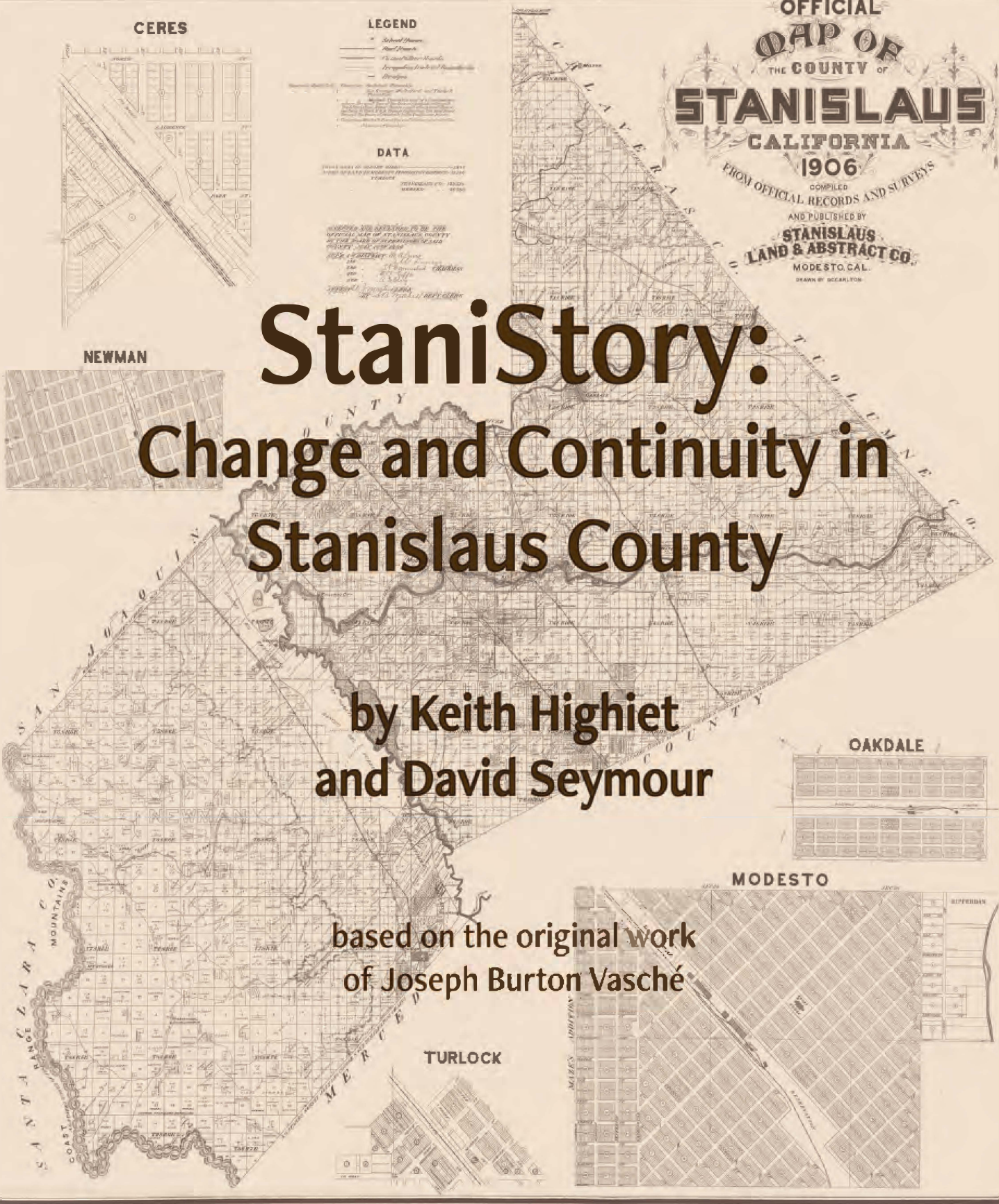
OAKDALE



MODESTO



TURLOCK



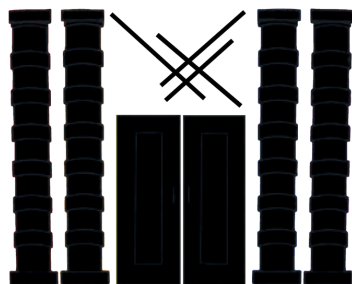
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**MC HENRY
M U S E U M**
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Mapping Stanislaus County in California

The large map of California's 58 counties shows Stanislaus located centrally in the state.

The breakout map below shows a close-up of Stanislaus and its surrounding counties.

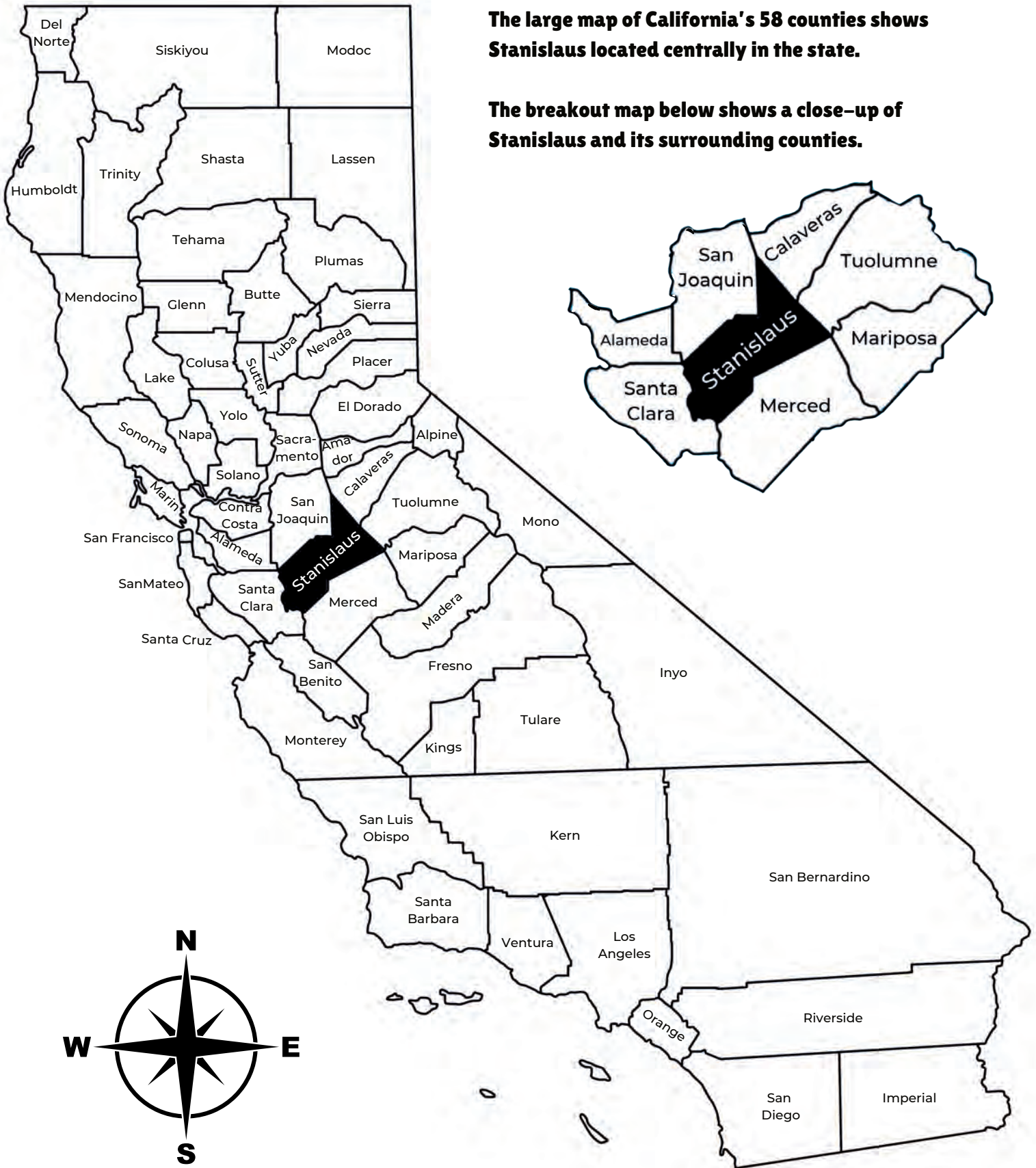


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PREFACE

The mission of StaniStory (that’s a mash-up of the words ‘Stanislaus’ and ‘history’) is to instill in students an appreciation of Stanislaus County’s history and to help readers identify connections from their own lives to their larger community. This book is designed for third grade teachers to read along with their students. Teachers should guide students through each section. Older students (including adults) can read it independently. *Read one or two sections a day ONLY*, and take time to absorb all that you learn.

INTRODUCTION

As a resident of Stanislaus County, you are part of its storied local history. As you learn more about the area and its history, you may realize the different ways you fit in. You can also think about what kind of future impact you want to have here.

Key facts are in **bold**. Defined concepts and words are underlined.

Students! What do you know about Stanislaus County? Write it down and share with a friend or your class before you begin to explore more.



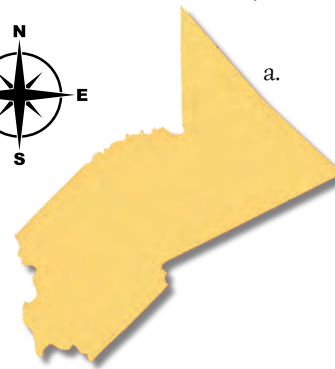
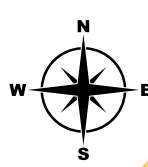
OVERVIEW

Stanislaus County is an extraordinary place with a fascinating history. The area has been inhabited by plants and animals for about two million years. **Indigenous Americans** have lived on the land which is now Stanislaus County and its surrounding areas for more than 10,000 years. Since then, three different countries ruled the land here:

Spain (1806* - 1821)

Mexico (1821 - 1848)

United States of America (1848 - present)



Stanislaus County is shaped like a kicked-up boot.

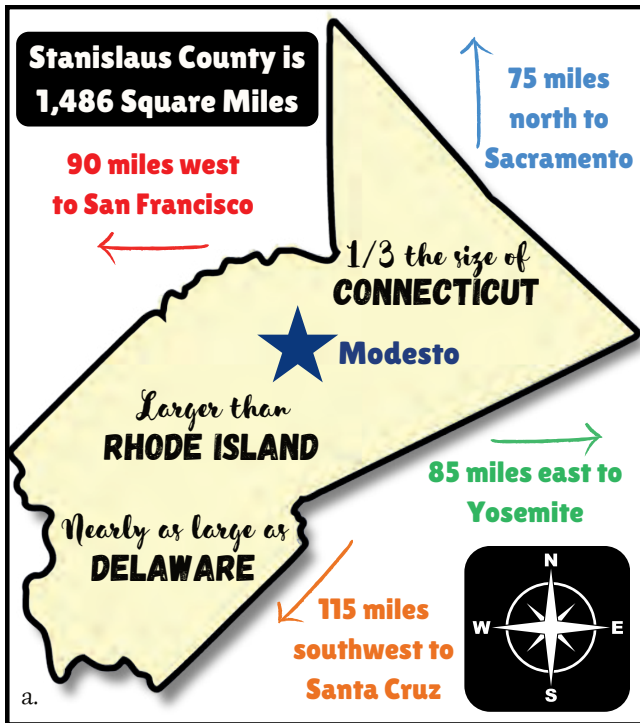
For the past 200 years, the primary use of this land has been for agriculture. Stanislaus has ranked among the top ten counties for **agriculture (or, “ag”)** farm production value (often numbers 5, 6, or 7 in recent decades) in both California and the United States each year for many decades. Remarkably, the top ten ag-producing counties in the state are in fact the same top ten-producing counties for the entire nation too.

More than 550,000 people live here today. The county has nine (9) cities, several other towns, and plenty of countryside. Nearly half of the county’s population lives in the city of Modesto; it is also the county seat (where the local county government is based).

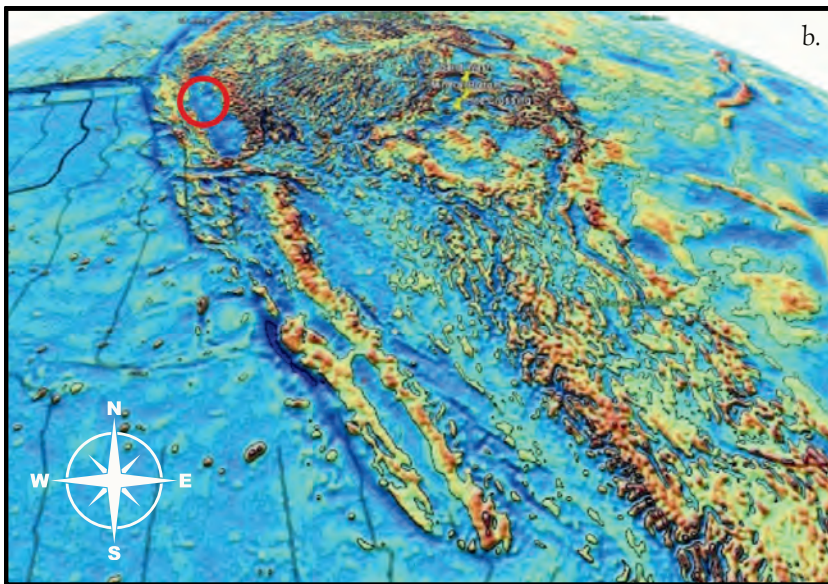
**Spain claimed the area as early as 1519, but the first Spaniard to purposefully explore the land which is now Stanislaus County was Gabriel Moraga in 1806.*



SIZE AND VEHICLE DRIVING DISTANCES



The graphic above is inspired by Joseph Burton Vasché's 'Our County - A Story of Stanislaus,' the first Stanislaus County-wide elementary history textbook, published in 1941. The driving distances are shown from Modesto, the county seat.



This view shows the U.S. and Mexico if seawater levels were raised, similar to how it was tens of millions of years ago. Stanislaus County is in the area where the red circle is overlaid, located in the upper left of the graphic.

GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Stanislaus County is almost 1,500 square miles in size, which is larger than the state of Rhode Island!

The eastern portion of Stanislaus County is the lower foothills of the **Sierra Nevada** mountain range (often just called the "Sierra").

The western portion of Stanislaus County is part of the **Diablo Range** (which is part of the Coast Ranges of California). At least eight natural water springs flow in this area, including the Adobe Springs. The highest points in Stanislaus County are all located here in the Diablo mountains:

- Mount Stakes (3,804 feet)
- Mount Oso (3,347 feet)
- Crevison Peak (2,103 feet)

The Del Puerto Canyon is also located in these mountains. It is among a select number of places in the U.S. where parts of the earth's mantle (an underground rocky part of the earth between its surface and hot liquid core) have been thrust upward to the surface.

The central portion of Stanislaus County is its largest land area. It is in the middle of California's **Central Valley** (the "Great Valley of California"), and the valley extends north and south beyond Stanislaus County.

More than 60 million years ago, the Central Valley was fully underwater as part of an ocean. Next, it was a shallow water inland sea area, connected to the Pacific Ocean at a couple of points. The Central Valley was fully formed 2 - 3 million years ago.

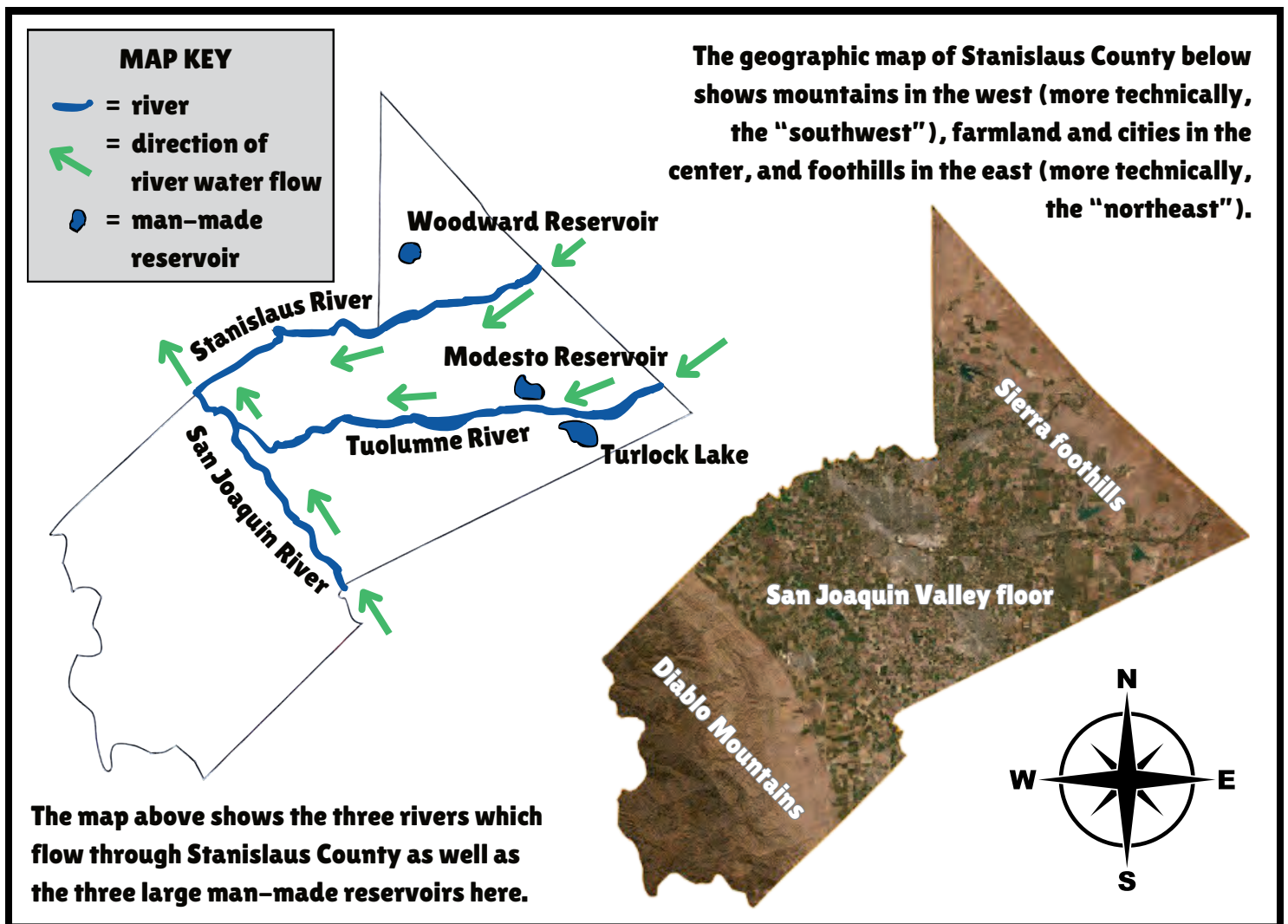
The Central Valley is actually composed of two barely distinct valleys: the Sacramento Valley makes up the northern part, and the San Joaquin Valley is the southern part. The **San Joaquin Valley** (where Stanislaus County's flat land area is located) is called "the breadbasket of the world" for its global agricultural impact.

The place where the 'two' valleys join together in the middle of the Central Valley is called the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta is where the rivers from most of the Central Valley merge as they flow out to the San Francisco Bay, which then connects to the Pacific Ocean.

The type of soil found in the valley floor of Stanislaus County is called loam (fertile soil made up of about equal parts of sand, silt, and clay).

Snowpack from the Sierra which melts after each winter creates the three main waterways flowing through the county:

- Stanislaus River** - in the northeast of the county
- Tuolumne River** - in the central-eastern part of the county
- San Joaquin River** - in the central part of the county



The Stanislaus River and Tuolumne River flow east to west from the Sierra. They are tributaries to the San Joaquin River, which flows northward along the valley floor as it reaches the Delta. Tributaries are rivers or streams which flow into other rivers or into another body of water.

There are three large man-made reservoirs (lakes used as a source of water supply when it's needed) in Stanislaus County. They are the Modesto Reservoir, Turlock Lake, and Woodward Reservoir. All are on the eastern side of the county. The source of the water in them is melted snowpack from the Sierra.

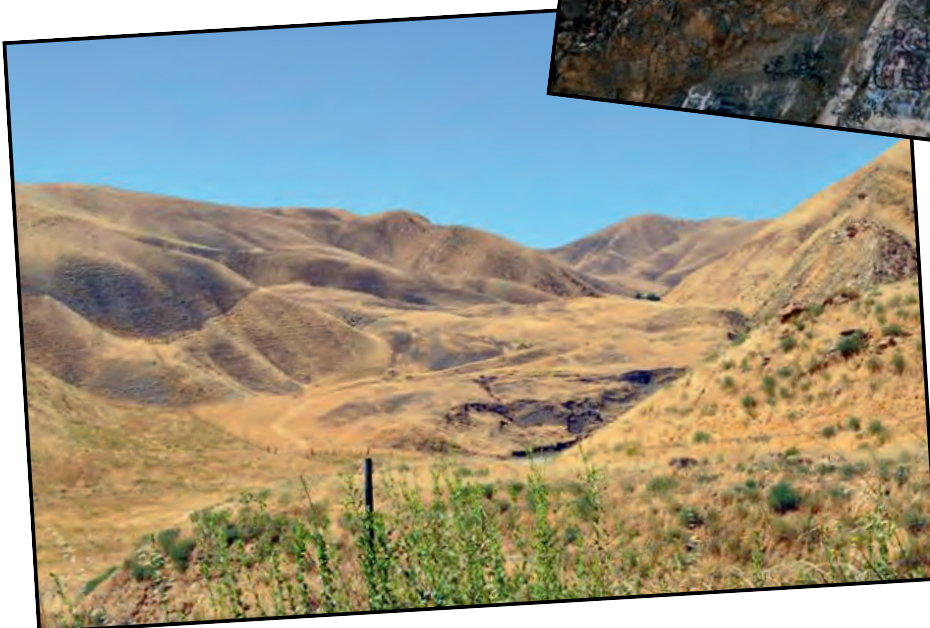
CLIMATE AND LANDSCAPE

The weather in Stanislaus County is good for agricultural food production. It has a **Mediterranean** (named for the sea between Europe and Africa) type of climate, marked by mild rainy winters and hot dry summers. The land can seem like a wet marsh in the winter and a dry desert in the summer.

In its non-farmed natural state, Stanislaus County is a grassland (a land area covered by grass) dotted by several species of trees. Some of the trees are varieties of cottonwood, oak, and willow. Most of the county's rainfall occurs during the winter months, averaging around twelve (12) inches per year. The rain usually moves into the county from the west, which is the windward side (the direction from where the wind blows). The Diablo Range acts as a rain shadow (a mountainous region which blocks much rainfall). The valley floor is on the leeward side (the downwind area).

A wintertime feature at the valley floor level is called radiation fog (thick fog that settles on the valley floor after large amounts of rain). In Stanislaus County and the Central Valley, this type of fog is called **tule fog**. Tule is pronounced "too-lee" and is named after the tule bulrush sedge plants found in the valley.

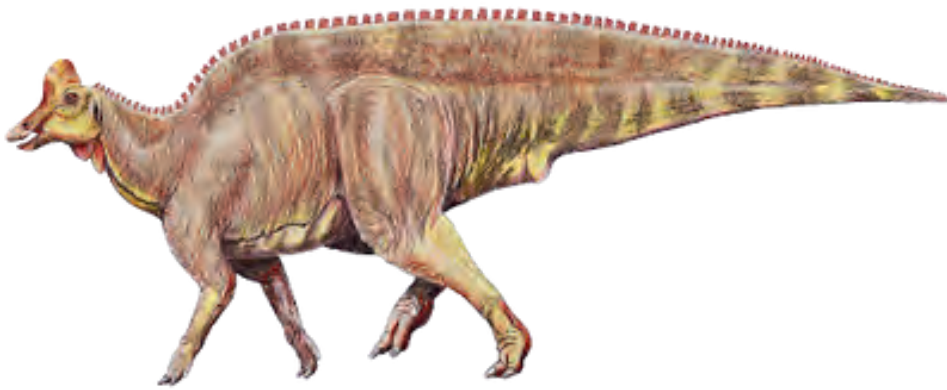
The entrance to Del Puerto Canyon has been nicknamed 'Graffiti Rock' for all of the unauthorized public paint marked and sprayed on it. The rock is a place where the earth's crust has been upwardly-thrust to its outer surface.



Del Puerto Canyon is located in the Diablo Mountains, which is part of the Coast Ranges of California.

PREHISTORIC ANIMALS

More than 60 million years ago, giant sea lizards like plesiosaurs and mosasaurs swam through the area. In 1936, a local teenager, Allan Bennison, found the skeleton fossil of a **hadrosaur**, a duck-billed dinosaur in the Del Puerto Canyon of Stanislaus County. This was the first-ever dinosaur remains discovery in California. A year later nearby, he found the skull of a **mosasaur**, an aquatic lizard.



a.

Hadrosaur

About 15 million years ago, fish, sharks, and even walruses swam through the area.

When the land formed about two million years ago, the county became home to numerous wild animals, including camels, horses, and mastodons. One notable animal was the **California Mammoth** (like “Manny” from the cartoon movie, *Ice Age*). Mammoths inhabited the area for millions of years and were around until up to just about 10,000 years ago (right around the same time when the first humans arrived!). On an evolutionary timeline, it’s like the mammoths were here just moments ago!



b.

Mosasaur



c.

California Mammoth

YOKUTS

The first human beings arrived to the land of what is now Stanislaus County at least 10,000 years ago. They are called the Indigenous Americans. Indigenous means born in a certain place, and Americans refers to the land which is now the United States. Other terms for Indigenous Americans are ‘Native Peoples’ or ‘First Peoples’ (the earliest people to occupy a land region). The term ‘Native Americans’ is the official U.S. government wording for Indigenous Americans. The term American Indians (or, just “Indians”) was used to describe these very groups of people for hundreds of years, but is less commonly used today.

The Indigenous Americans who occupied Stanislaus County exclusively until about 200 years ago were several subtribes of the **Yokuts** tribe (the word Yokuts means “people”). The Yokuts covered the largest land area of any Indigenous Americans in California. They lived along the waterways of the San Joaquin Valley and the nearby foothills in about 50 subtribe communities, usually with up to 350 people (around 50 to 100 families each). The Yokuts subtribes in Stanislaus County were:

1.) The Lakisamni, who lived along the Stanislaus River from near where Knights Ferry is located down toward the city of Ripon [in San Joaquin County]. Today, we know more about the Lakisamni than any other local Yokuts subtribe.

2.) The Tualimnu, who lived along the Tuolumne River. The word Tuolumne comes from Tualimnu, a Yokuts word meaning a “cluster of stone wigwams” (round, domed huts).

3.) and 4.) The Hoyumne and Miumne, who lived along the San Joaquin River in the Del Puerto Canyon area of the Diablo Mountains.

In the summers, a band of indigenous people from the **Miwok** tribe would venture from their main home area further up the mountains [in Tuolumne County] to live next to the Lakisamni Yokuts in the now-Knights Ferry area of the county.

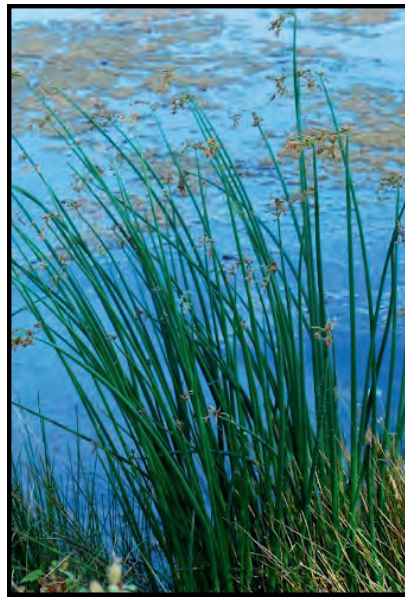
Each Yokuts subtribe had its own dialect of Yokutsan (the Yokuts language), but the local subtribe dialects are extinct. In fact, the entire Yokutsan language is endangered. It is related to a language family spoken by both the Miwok and Ohlone people, with whom nonessential trading was done. It is more distantly related to languages spoken by Indigenous Americans in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and Canadian west coast.



The Yokuts made their homes by digging holes into the ground. Over these holes they placed tree poles. They covered the poles with willow branches, **tules** (hard stem bulrush sedge plants found in wet, marshy areas; they look like tall clumps of thick grass), and leaves. These shelters of branches and leaves helped protect the Yokuts from the weather elements - whether hot or cold.

Inside their shelters, they had grass mats, rabbit skin blankets, stone tools, and reed baskets. They were master basket weavers, and their reed baskets were used to cook food with hot rocks and to hold water. Their clothes were made of deerskin or woven tules. They did NOT typically wear elaborate headdresses. When the weather was colder, they wore capes made of fur from animals they killed. When the weather was warmer, they wore little or no clothing.

The Lakisamni Yokuts survived on food obtained from where they lived, including plants which naturally grew, insects, and animals they hunted. They are somewhat unique as their survival was not at all trade-dependent with other tribes. In fact, the early 1800s American explorers remarked at how the Lakisamni Yokuts were not trade-dependent at all. This was not the case with most other Indigenous Americans the explorers had encountered on their journeys across the country. The land where the Lakisamni lived sustained them fully and wholly.



a.

The tule plant can be found at natural fresh water marsh areas throughout the San Joaquin Valley.



b.

The photo to the right shows a recreated appearance of Yokuts in traditional clothing.



c.

Local Yokuts used tules and other plants to build homes (often housing many families at once) like the recreated wigwam in this photo.

Yokuts cooking baskets, left and top right

Yokuts trading basket, bottom right



d.



a.

Olivella Shells held together on a string



b.

Acorns are the nuts of oak trees. They contain the seeds of the trees inside of them.

For food, the local Yokuts diet mainly consisted of the meat of acorns (the seeds of oak trees), which was ground into flour and then used in cooking. In fact, they never needed to plant anything for farming because the oak trees' acorns were so plentiful. Acorn grinding sites can still be seen today along the Stanislaus River in Knights Ferry. The Yokuts also ate nuts, roots, seeds, lizards, snakes, frogs, berries, fish, and grasshoppers. They used spears to catch fish from the rivers. At times during the year, some Yokuts had great rabbit hunts.

The local Yokuts did some trading with other native peoples, but it was not for survival reasons. They mainly traded goods with the Ohlone (formerly called 'Costanoan') and Miwok tribes. They got dried sea urchins, dried starfish, and olivella (shells which are small like an olive) from the Ohlone to the west, and obsidian (a glass rock formed from the cooling of volcanic lava) from the Miwok in the mountains to the east. The obsidian was used to make knives and arrowheads for hunting animals. In exchange for these items, they gave beads which were made out of glass, shells, and stones.

The Yokuts had their own laws which had to be obeyed. They built sweat houses that were dug into the ground and used by men only for ceremonial and health purposes. They held dances around large campfires. They lived off the land just as nature had made it. They only killed animals that they needed for food. They made very few changes to the natural landscape. They made wise use of what nature had given them, and lived as one with the land.



c.

Hard chipped rocks were used to cut and carve obsidian into arrowheads (show in this photo) which were then used as the tips of spears for animal hunting.

NATURAL PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

When the Yokuts lived in now-Stanislaus County, there were no towns, highways, railroads, farms, or fences. Winter and spring rains turned the county green, and grasses and wildflowers covered the ground. Great oak trees stood on the flat land. Willow trees lined the rivers. The county looked like a large garden in the spring. When the snow from the Sierra Nevada melted, the rivers were more than a mile wide. With no summer rain and little autumn (fall) rain, the grass turned yellow and brown during those seasons. The rivers became little streams. In summer, the county was much like a hot and dry desert.

There were herds of antelope, deer, and tule elk grazing on grass across the land during this time. Otters and beavers made their homes along the rivers and creeks. Coyotes, grizzly bears, and rabbits lived here too. Stanislaus County was like a giant wildlife park.

Today, wild animals still live in the area. There are bass, catfish, salmon, and other fish in the rivers. There are badgers, kit foxes, mountain lions, opossums, raccoons, skunks, snakes, and squirrels on the land. And there are blackbirds, cranes, crows, ducks, eagles, finches, geese, hawks, hummingbirds, owls, quail, turkey vultures, sparrows, swallows, and woodpeckers in the sky.



Valley Oak Tree

a.



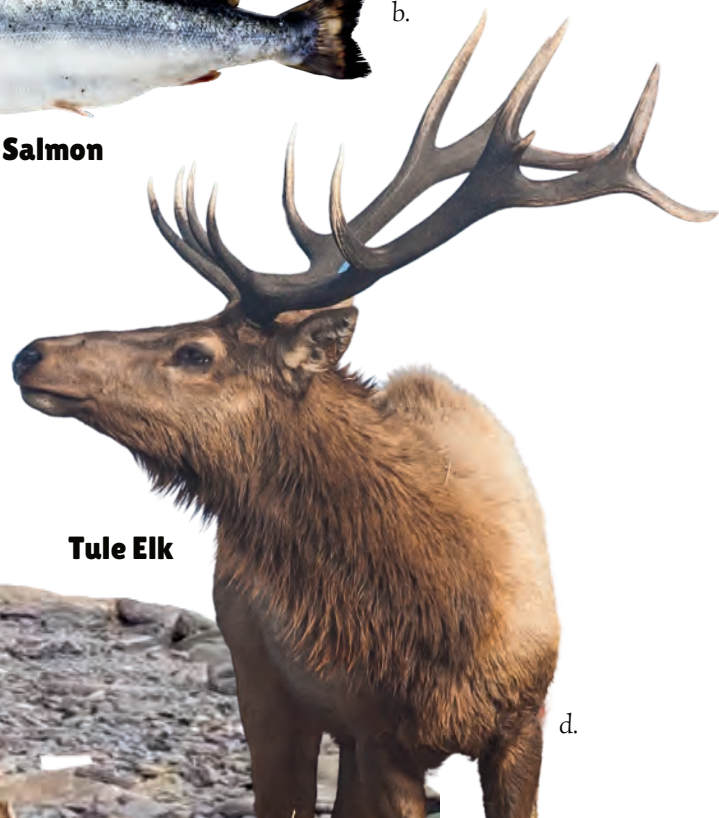
Salmon

b.

**Mountain
Lion**



c.



Tule Elk

d.

SPAIN CLAIMS THE REGION (1806* – 1821)

By at least 1780, the Diablo Mountains of western Stanislaus County were used as part of the **El Camino Viejo** (which means “The Old Road” in Spanish). We can think of this trail today as the first ‘highway’ through the county. This trail took Spanish missionaries and soldiers back and forth from Los Angeles in southern California to the Bay Area in northern California. There were five creeks along the trail in Stanislaus County which were used as places for the travelers to resupply themselves with fresh water.

In 1806, Spanish explorer **Gabriel Moraga**, and his group of Spanish soldiers and Catholic (a Christian religious institution) missionary priests, came to do a more complete exploration of Stanislaus County. They were looking for a place to build a Spanish Catholic mission (a Christian religious community with buildings for housing, work, and prayer). They gave the Tuolumne River and the San Joaquin Valley the names by which we still call them today, but they did not find this area suitable for building any missions.

a.



Instead, the Spanish soldiers traveled back and forth from their already established missions to round up the Indigenous Americans here. They wanted them to convert (adopt a set of beliefs which are particular to a certain religion) to Christianity as Catholics and have them work at the nearby missions along the northern California coast. The closest mission was Mission San José.

The Spanish called a group of Indigenous Americans who lived together in a certain place a ‘rancheria.’ Sometimes the Yokuts and other Indigenous Americans ran away from the missions. They took the Spaniards’ horses and cattle for their own use back to the Lakisamni Yokuts native homeland along the Stanislaus River. The Spanish soldiers would then come try to get the runaways, causing fighting and small wars.

*Spain claimed the area as early as 1519, but the first Spaniard to purposefully explore the land which is now Stanislaus County was Gabriel Moraga in 1806.

Mission San José



b.

MEXICO CONTROLS THE REGION (1821 – 1848)

Spain lost its hold over the region when the country of Mexico won its independence in 1821. Beginning in that year, the area which is now Stanislaus County was under Mexico's control. The missionaries and soldiers who continued to come here were considered to be Mexican people then, and throughout the next decade they continued the same activities as they had under Spanish rule.



Mexican Flag in 1821

a.

ESTANISLAO (CUCUNUCHI) AND YOSCOLO

Born around the year 1800, a boy named Cucunuchi was one of the Yokuts who learned to read and write in Spanish. (Cucunuchi is sometimes spelled as 'Cucunichi' in other historical works). He was brought to live at Mission San José by Spanish soldiers at an early age. He was baptized (religiously accepted by a church in a ceremony) as Catholic by the missionaries there and was renamed 'Estanislao' in 1821.

This was the same year that Mexico gained its independence from Spain. His conversion - along with that of the other Yokuts - was not voluntary; it was forced by the missionaries and soldiers who had come to the land.

Estanislao was named after Saint Stanislaus of Poland, a Catholic man who had died standing up for his beliefs and his people in the year 1079. The given name of Estanislao foreshadowed (an indication of future events) what he would do for the Lakisamni Yokuts and fellow Indigenous Americans in the coming years.

Estanislao's first job at the mission was to train mules. It was difficult work to do. The mission Padres (a Catholic priest is called a 'Father', and the word for father in Spanish is 'padre') made him, and the other Indigenous Americans who they had rounded up from all over northern California, work very hard there. Estanislao and the other Indigenous Americans did not like the way they were treated at the mission, so they planned a major escape.

In the late 1820s, Estanislao led a group of fellow Indigenous Americans in escaping from the mission into the eastward mountains. The Mexican missionaries and soldiers actually named these mountains 'Diablo' because they thought the Indigenous Americans could only escape through them with the help of the devil. Diablo means "devil" in Spanish.

A large statue of Chief Estanislao is located at the corner of 11th and 'I' streets in Modesto. Two smaller, similar versions sit inside the McHenry Museum.



b., c.

They made it across the valley floor and set up camp near where the San Joaquin and Stanislaus rivers meet (where the cities of Salida and Ripon are now located). Estanislao and the others were so angry at the way they had been treated that they stole and burned things that belonged to the Mexican missionaries and soldiers.

The Mexican government responded to Estanislao and his men by sending more soldiers to stop them, but Estanislao was particularly tough. There were battles for several years. Cannonballs (the round shot fired from large guns) left behind from the battles were actually found on site by local farmers in the area many years later. Another Yokuts man named Yoscolo helped Estanislao by bringing more Indigenous Americans from Mission Santa Clara in 1831 to help fight against the Mexican soldiers.

Estanislao would carve an 'S' on trees to mark the locations of his battle victories against the Mexican soldiers. Yoscolo wore a mask during the fights. The fictional character of **Zorro** is thought by some historians to be inspired by Estanislao, and also by Yoscolo: Zorro marks a 'Z' with his sword into the clothes - and sometimes the bodies - of his enemies; and he wears a mask.

The Mexican soldiers finally defeated Estanislao and his men at their base camp near the Stanislaus River. Estanislao was returned to Mission San José and was forgiven by the mission Padres (Fathers). By 1833, most of the Yokuts living in Stanislaus County had died from malaria and other diseases which were brought by people from other lands. Estanislao died at the mission in 1838, possibly from smallpox disease.

Chief Estanislao is the most famous of all Yokuts people today. The Stanislaus River and Stanislaus County are named in his honor.



'Zorro'
(Walt
Disney
Studios)

AMERICAN FUR TRAPPERS AND EXPLORERS



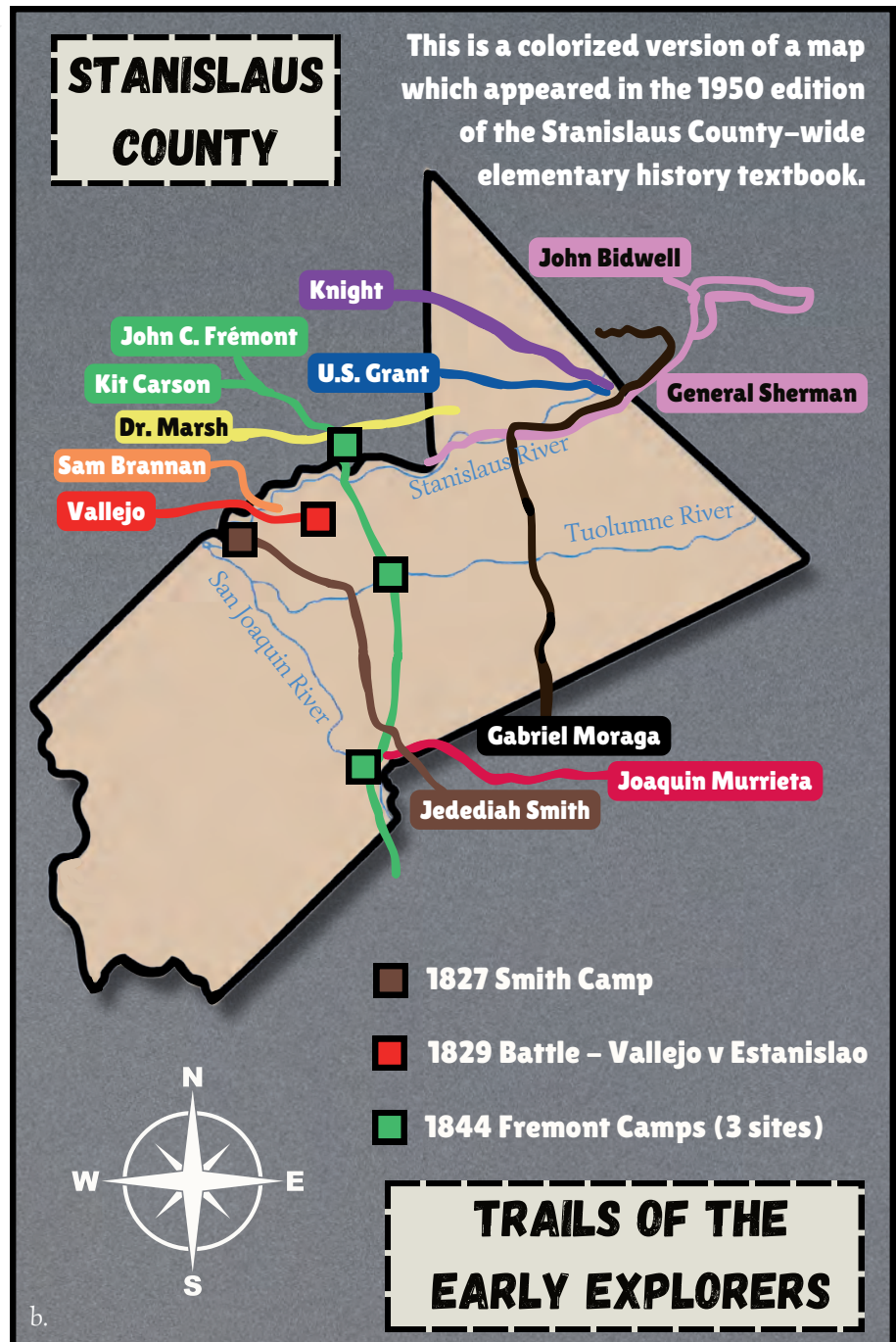
a.

The California grizzly bear was hunted to extinction more than a century ago.

The local explorers included some of America's most famous frontiersmen (people who explore unsettled lands) who hunted for animals in the county:

- Kit Carson was a scout guide who could not read, but spoke six languages. He was nationally famous during his lifetime, and became more famous after he died when a series of novels based on his life were written in the 1900s. In 1940, a Hollywood film about his life was made.
- "Broken Hand" Thomas Fitzpatrick was born in Ireland and immigrated to the U.S. as a young man. He got the nickname "Broken Hand" after his left hand was damaged in a firearms gun accident. He was well respected by both Indigenous Americans and American settlers.
- John C. Frémont's time in Stanislaus County and the surrounding areas became one of the most influential events in American westward expansion when the accounts of his

American fur trappers (people who catch and kill wild animals to sell their fur) came to Stanislaus County in the 1820s and 1830s when Mexico still owned the county's land. These men camped along the rivers and streams, and some called the land Paradise Valley. They set out their traps hoping to catch beaver, raccoon, otter, and other animals to sell their fur. They also hunted tule elk, antelope, and grizzly bears locally.



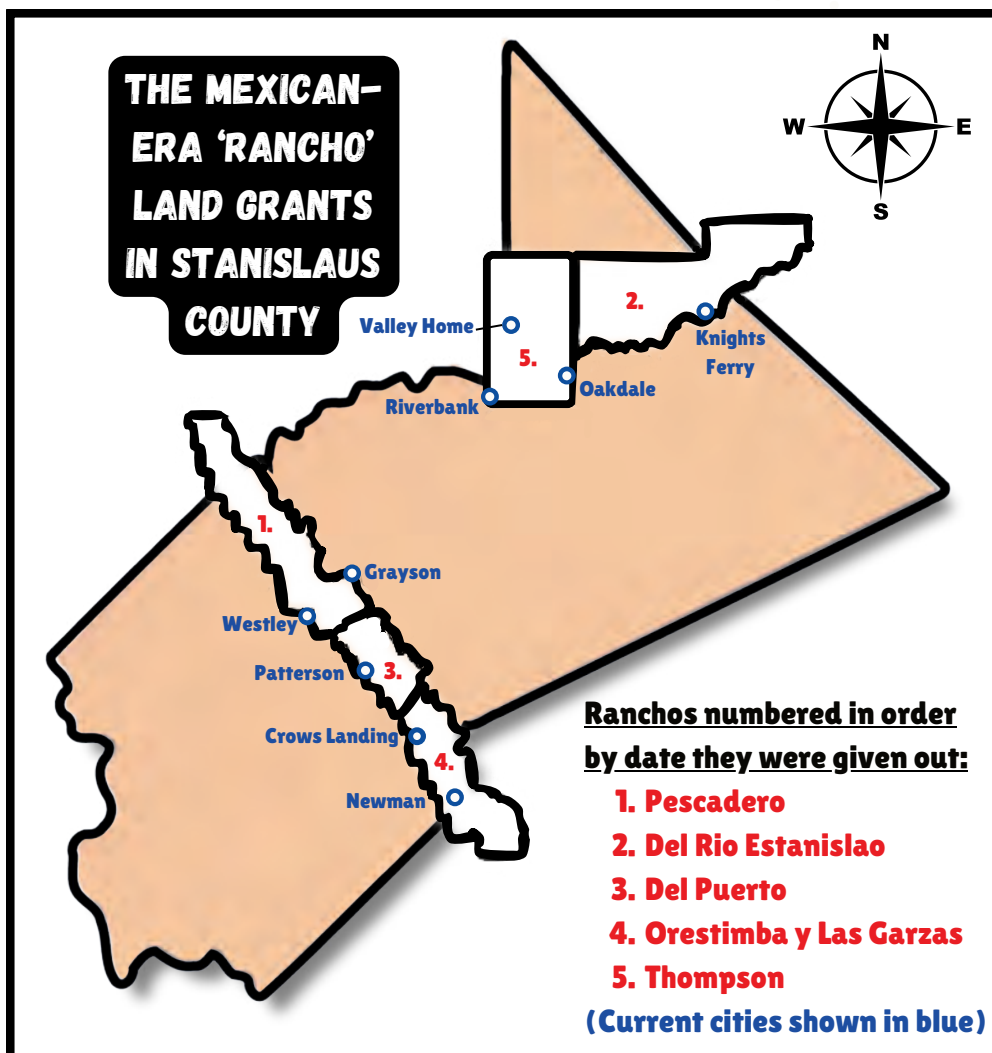
expedition were published. He was one of the first two U.S. Senators to represent California in Congress, and was the first person to run as a Republican for U.S. president. Modesto's Fremont Elementary is named for him.

- Jedediah Smith's expedition routes are now considered as important as Lewis and Clark's. He was the first American to cross the Mojave Desert and the Sierra Nevada mountains. He also charted the course through the most difficult pass of what became the Oregon Trail. He even lost an ear after being mauled by a grizzly bear!

RANCHOS

When Mexico owned the land here, its government gave out land grants (pieces of land which a government gives to a person or to a group of people) called **ranchos** across California. Most were given to Californios (descendants of Spanish or Mexican settlers in California in the 1700s - 1800s). This was done to help settle the frontier land area of the then-Mexican state called Alta California (a large land territory which includes what is now California and several other western U.S. states; "alta" means 'upper' or 'high' in Spanish).

The Indigenous Americans who remained here did not like the rancho settlers. They did not like having their land taken away. They responded by taking cattle and horses from the settlers. Some homes and barns of the settlers were burned. The Indigenous Americans did these things in trying to get the rancho settlers to leave.

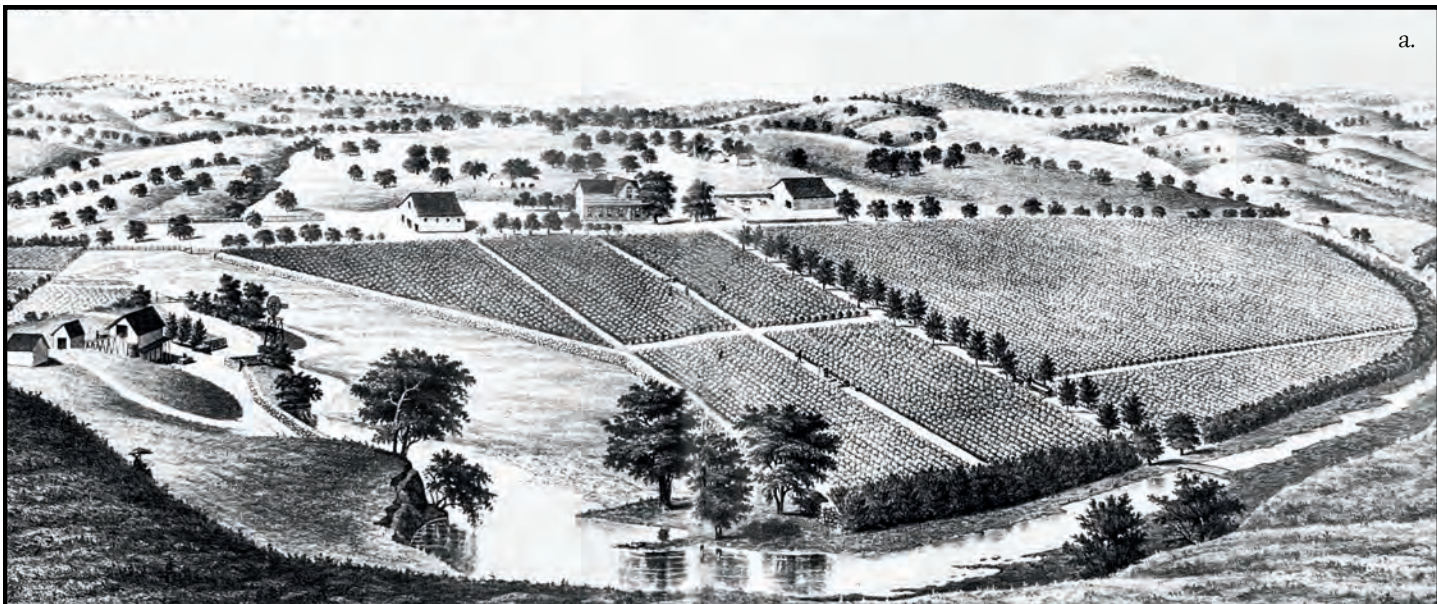


There were five ranchos given out in the area of Stanislaus County:

1. Pescadero: 35,446 acres given in November of 1843 to Valentin Higuera and Rafael Feliz. The towns of Grayson and Westley are now located here.

2. Del Rio Estanislao: 48,886 acres given in December of 1843 to Francisco Rico and José Antonio Castro*. The town of Knights Ferry is now located in this area. This rancho was later sold to Abraham Schell in 1863. He planted the first wine grapes and opened Stanislaus County's first winery on this land. It was called Red Mountain Vineyard.

This map was recreated from the 1950 Stanislaus County-wide elementary history textbook.



Red Mountain Vineyard

*History can be confusing! A different person also named José Antonio Castro was a temporary governor of the Mexican state of Alta California from 1835 to 1836. He was NOT the same José Antonio Castro who co-owned the Rancho Del Rio Estanislao locally.

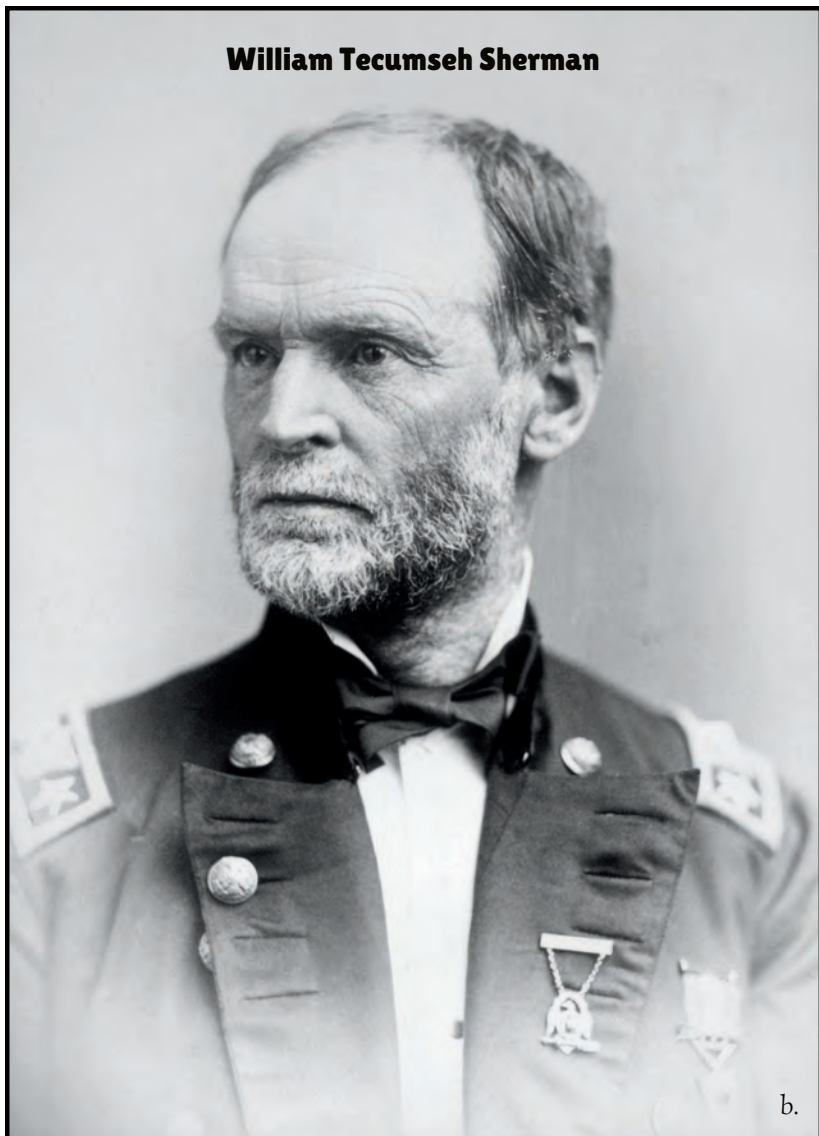
3. Del Puerto: 13,340 acres given in January of 1844 to Mariano and Pedro Hernández. Patterson is now located here.

4. Orestimba y Las Garzas: 26,641 acres given in February of 1844 to Sebastian Nunez. Crows Landing and Newman are now both located here.

Orestimba is a Yokuts word which means “meeting place.” The area’s Orestimba Creek and Orestimba High School still carry forward this name today.

5. Thompson: 35,533 acres given in June of 1846 to Alpheus Thompson. Oakdale, Riverbank, and Valley Home are all here.

At one time, one of the co-owners of this rancho was **William Tecumseh Sherman**. In 1848, he wrote the official California government notification that gold had been discovered by James Marshall at Sutter’s Fort, setting off the Gold Rush of 1849. Sherman later became a famous General in the U.S. Union Army during the American Civil War in the 1860s.



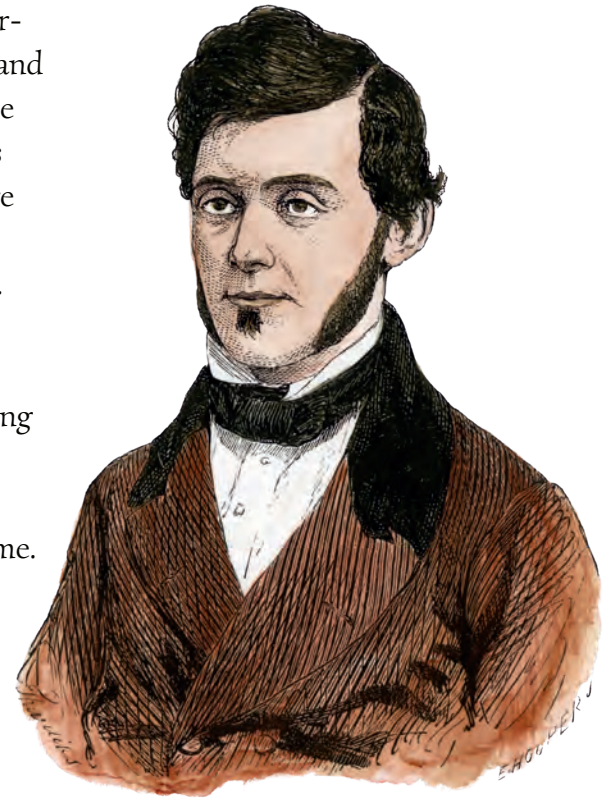
NEW HOPE/STANISLAUS PRAIRIE

In 1846, about thirty members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly called Mormons (a Christian-based religious and cultural group), were among the first American pioneers (first people to explore or settle an area) to build homes on land by the Stanislaus River. Seeking a place to live without religious persecution, they were led by Sam Brannon. They settled the area which is now near the western part of Caswell Memorial State Park in San Joaquin County. This site is directly west of Salida, a town in Stanislaus County.

The Mormons called their village New Hope. They named the outlying area the Stanislaus prairie. Importantly, this is among the first-ever land locations named for Chief Estanislao, whose true legendary life was already well known. New Hope was called Stanislaus City by some.

They grew wheat and a variety of vegetables with irrigation, digging ditches from the nearby rivers to allow the water to flow into their fields. A year or so after establishing themselves here, most of these settlers were told by their church leaders to go to Utah (where the Mormon Church was headquartered). The New Hope/Stanislaus prairie settlement was mostly left abandoned.

Sam Brannon later went on to be the first person to widely publicize the California Gold Rush through a newspaper he owned in San Francisco, and he became the first millionaire created by the Gold Rush.



**Sam
Brannon**

a.

MEXICAN- AMERICAN WAR

Mexico and America went to war in 1846 over control of what became the southwest states of the United States. Mexico lost the land which is now California (including Stanislaus County) to the United States in 1848. When this happened, the Mexican rancho owners were still allowed to keep their land, but the owners had to provide proof of ownership to the U.S. government to do so. It was difficult, costly, and time consuming to do this though. In the end, many Mexican rancho landowners lost their land.



American flag in the 1840s

Pause to take **Review Questions Part 1** in the Appendix (following page 44).

LEGENDARY MEXICAN FIGURES

The rise of Mexican 'banditos' (bandits, or outlaws) in the land areas which Mexico had lost to the United States began in the late 1840s and lasted mainly through the 1860s. The banditos were men who felt they had lost their land unfairly to the U.S. and its many new settlers. In revenge, they stole gold and horses from American settlers and murdered some of them as well as some of the new Chinese immigrants in California.

Some of these men passed through the Del Puerto Canyon and Diablo Mountains areas of Stanislaus County as part of their escape routes. The most famous of these notorious and legendary Mexican figures were:

1. The Five Joaquins Gang - This group of five men had names which all included 'Joaquin.' They all had families who came from the Sonora territory of now-northern Mexico. The families of the men had traveled through the area of Stanislaus County for many years, bringing wild horses from here southward to the Mexican state of Sonora. When gold was discovered in 1848, these men and their families immediately went to mine for it in the foothills, establishing the city of Sonora (in Tuolumne County).

2. **Joaquin Murrieta** - He was the most famous of all of these figures in California. He was the leader of the Five Joaquins Gang and is sometimes compared to Robin Hood. He is actually the main person thought to have inspired the fictional Zorro folk hero character (described in more detail in the earlier section on Estanislao and Yoscolo).

3. Manuel "Three-Fingered Jack" Garcia - He was feared and famous for stealing and murdering. He got his nickname after he lost a portion of his hand in a fight. He sometimes worked with Joaquin Murrieta and his gang.



a.

GOLD RUSH

Joaquin Murrieta

The **Gold Rush** of 1849 brought people from all over the world to California in search of gold. They came from Australia, Chile, China, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, the Sandwich Islands (now Hawaii), and from other U.S. states. In Stanislaus County, boat-like floating barges were used to cross its three main rivers. Towns

sprung up at some locations where the rivers were crossed. Banks, stores, blacksmith shops, hotels, churches, and saloons were built in these new towns. Most of the gold found in Stanislaus County was from the rivers in two places:

- near the town of **Knights Ferry** on the Stanislaus River
- between the towns of **La Grange** and **Waterford** on the Tuolumne River

In 1850, California became a U.S. state and the land here became part of the newly created Tuolumne County.

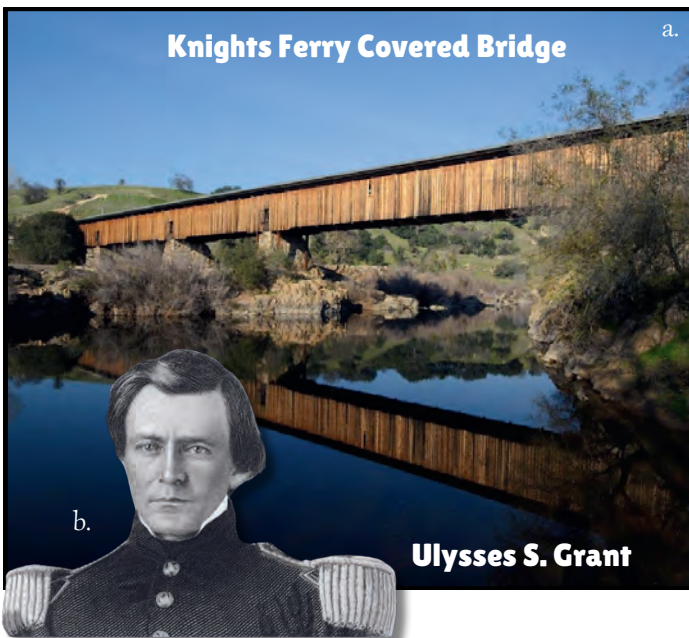


California state flag

KNIGHTS FERRY

Knights Ferry Covered Bridge

a.



b.

Ulysses S. Grant

Knights Ferry was founded in 1848 to 1849 by an explorer, Captain **William Knight**. He was a medical doctor who had become a fur trapper and fur trader. He established the town as a place where his ferry boat would get gold miners across the Stanislaus River. The miners bought food and supplies from him, and he kept their gold safe. Knights Ferry was a midway destination for travelers between the port city of Stockton and the gold mines near the city of Sonora, which was nicknamed the “Queen of the Southern Mines.”

An 1849 gun fight killed Captain Knight in town (shortly after he had started the town). His properties were bought by brothers John and Lewis Dent. Lewis Dent was a signer of the

1849 California Constitution. In 1854, a flour mill was built on the river in town to grind grain for the miners and the townspeople. Remnants of the mill remain visible today. The town’s newspaper was called the *Knight’s Ferry Bee*, gold mining from the Stanislaus River occurred in and near the town, and cattle were raised on nearby hills.

The Dent brothers had a sister named Julia who married **Ulysses S. Grant**. Mr. Grant visited the Dents in Knights Ferry before becoming a famous Civil War General for the Union Army. He was later president of the United States, and he received visitors at the White House whom he remembered from Knights Ferry.

In 1857, an uncovered bridge was built across the Stanislaus River in Knights Ferry. The town’s ferry boat was no longer used to get people across the river once the bridge was completed. The bridge was destroyed during the **Great Flood of 1862**. The flood was caused by a large amount of rain during the 1861 - 1862 winter, and it was the biggest natural disaster of the past 200 years in the county. The bridge was rebuilt with an enclosed covering in 1863, and at 379 feet long it became the longest covered bridge west of the Mississippi River in the United States.

LA GRANGE

In 1848 to 1849, fifty men from France came up the Tuolumne River and found gold at a sandbar site which they called French Bar. A bar is a piece of land formed by sand or gravel deposited there from a river or other body of water. By 1852, the Frenchmen had moved the town site to its present location, one mile up the river from their original site. La Grange means “the barn” in French. They built the first church in the county here, the St. Louis Catholic Church. About 2,000 people soon lived here, and about half of them were **Chinese**.

In the early 1850s, California passed taxes on non-American miners. This forced off the Chinese and French miners, as well as Mexicans and others, both locally and statewide.

Artist depiction of Chinese miners



In 1855, a man named **Bret Harte** came to the La Grange area. He was a teacher at a local school and lived in the area for a year. His experience living here inspired him to begin writing fiction stories of life in Gold Rush towns. His books and short stories became a new American genre (a certain type of fiction writing) called local color (writing about characters with typical customs, manner of speech, clothing, and features of a certain place and time). He became a well-known author nationally, remains an important fiction writer in American history, and an elementary school in Modesto is named for him.

Two miles down the river from La Grange were several large farms. Farmers did not have irrigation there back then, so they planted crops which could grow with seasonal rain only - like wheat, barley, and hay. When a small dam was built on the river a mile above La Grange in 1856, water from it was used to irrigate fruit trees and gardens in town.

Large machinery was brought in beginning in 1906 to dredge (to scoop out mud and debris) for gold. The dredging equipment picked up gravel and rocks in the river and separated the gold metal from the rocks. This big operation continued until 1951. La Grange is the only place in the western states of the U.S. where all four types of gold mining methods have been used: dredging, hydraulic (water jet), placer (panning), and underground (digging).

STANISLAUS COUNTY

Beginning in 1850, the land which we now call Stanislaus County was part of Tuolumne County. The county seat was Sonora, which is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. This was problematic for those who lived in the valley floor area because it was a great distance to reach Sonora when needing to conduct official county government business. It was difficult to do even simple things, like paying taxes.

In 1854, the California government expanded the number of counties in the state. As part of this change, **Stanislaus County** was created as a carve-out of Tuolumne County. The first county seat and first courthouse location in Stanislaus County was Adamsville, which is southwest of where Modesto is now located. The county seat moved several times before settling on Modesto in 1871:

1. Adamsville (spring of 1854)
2. Empire City (fall of 1854)
3. La Grange (1855)
4. Knights Ferry (1862)
5. Modesto (1871 - present)



Bret Harte



Below is a photo of the dredging equipment which was used to mine for gold in La Grange.



CATTLE



a.

**Dairy cows
near Turlock,
1910s**



b. **Local cattle brands**



c.

**Willms
Ranch
brand**

Most people who came to Stanislaus County did not find gold. Many miners became cattlemen. Cattle, sheep, and horses roamed the low Sierra foothills of the county. Thousands of more farm animals could be found on the flat lands of the county too. The animals ate the tall grass on the unfenced lands. They got their water from the local rivers and streams.

To identify who owned which cattle, the cattlemen branded their animals. Back then, animal branding referred to heating up a piece of iron which had a certain design, letter, or logo on it, and then marking the cattle or other large stock animal with it. For fifteen years, cattle raising was the county's most important business!

The Great Flood of 1862, which had washed out that first Knights Ferry bridge, also drowned many cattle. So, most of the cattlemen decided to grow planted crops instead. There are still cattle in the foothills of the county today, and because we have large dams and irrigation now, cattle are also kept on the valley floor flat land. Cattle are mainly in fenced areas now, and the industry remains important to the county.

WHEAT

Farmers found the valley floor of the county to be a good place for growing wheat grain because it could be dry farmed (relying only on rain to grow certain crops rather than irrigation). The weather was good for growing wheat. Because the land was flat it could be plowed easily. Plus, there were no large stones in the soil. The valley floor of the county looked like one giant wheat field from the 1860s to the 1880s.

Large plow and seeder machines helped get the fields planted for each crop season. When the wheat was ready to harvest, a combine harvester machine would process the wheat into grain flour. Teams of 32 horses or mules pulled the harvester through the fields. Later on, tractors were used to pull the harvesters.

Modesto and Stanislaus County were both known as the **'King of Wheat.'** More than two million bushels (equal to 120 million pounds) of wheat were produced in the county each year by the late 1860s. More wheat came from Stanislaus County than from any other county in California by 1875.



d.

These images show some early Stanislaus County wheat harvesting.



e.

RIVER "STEAMER" BARGES AND FERRY BOATS

Horses and mules pulled the farmers' bagged wheat to shipping port cities out of the county where it was sold in large amounts. Ships in the port cities delivered the wheat to feed people all around the world. Stockton was the closest city with a deep water shipping port. The trip from Stanislaus County to Stockton took several days by land though.

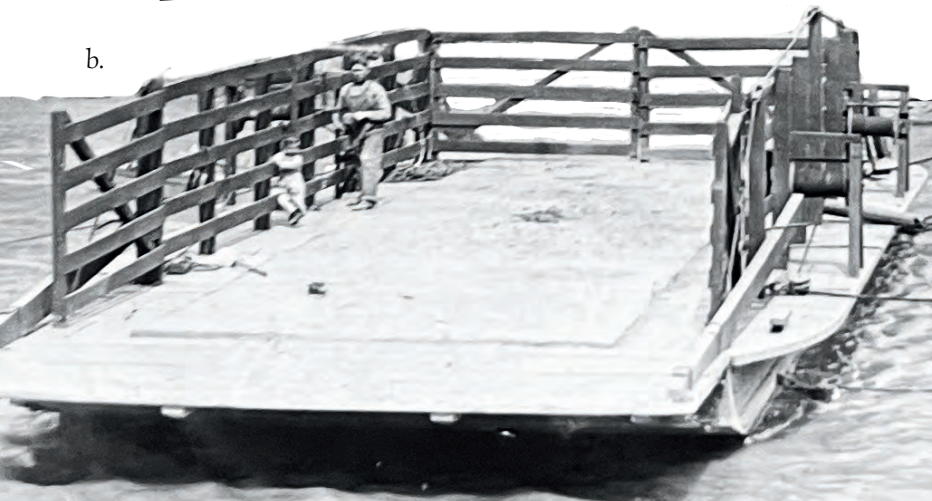
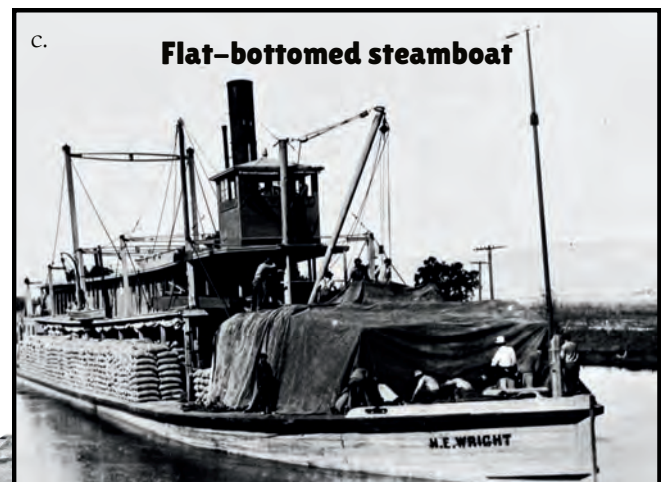
To save time, steam boat barges (flat-bottomed boats powered by steam, nicknamed "steamers") made their way along the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers. Wheat was loaded at locations throughout Stanislaus County for boat transportation to Stockton and other port cities further away. The boats were flat-bottomed so they could make it through the shallow rivers in our county. Towns were built along the rivers where the boats stopped so that the farmers, wagon drivers, and boatmen had places to shop, eat, and care for their animals. Hotels, blacksmith shops, horse stables, churches, stores, and saloons were built in these new riverside towns.

Crescent City, Empire City, Graysonville (now 'Grayson'), and Tuolumne City were some of the first towns in Stanislaus County where the steamers and barges stopped to load wheat. Floating ferry boats at many town sites transported people, animals, and merchandise across the rivers.

During some times of the year, the farmers could not use boats to send their grain to market because the water was too low for them to navigate. At other times, floods made boating unsafe. Farmers really wanted another way to ship their grain.



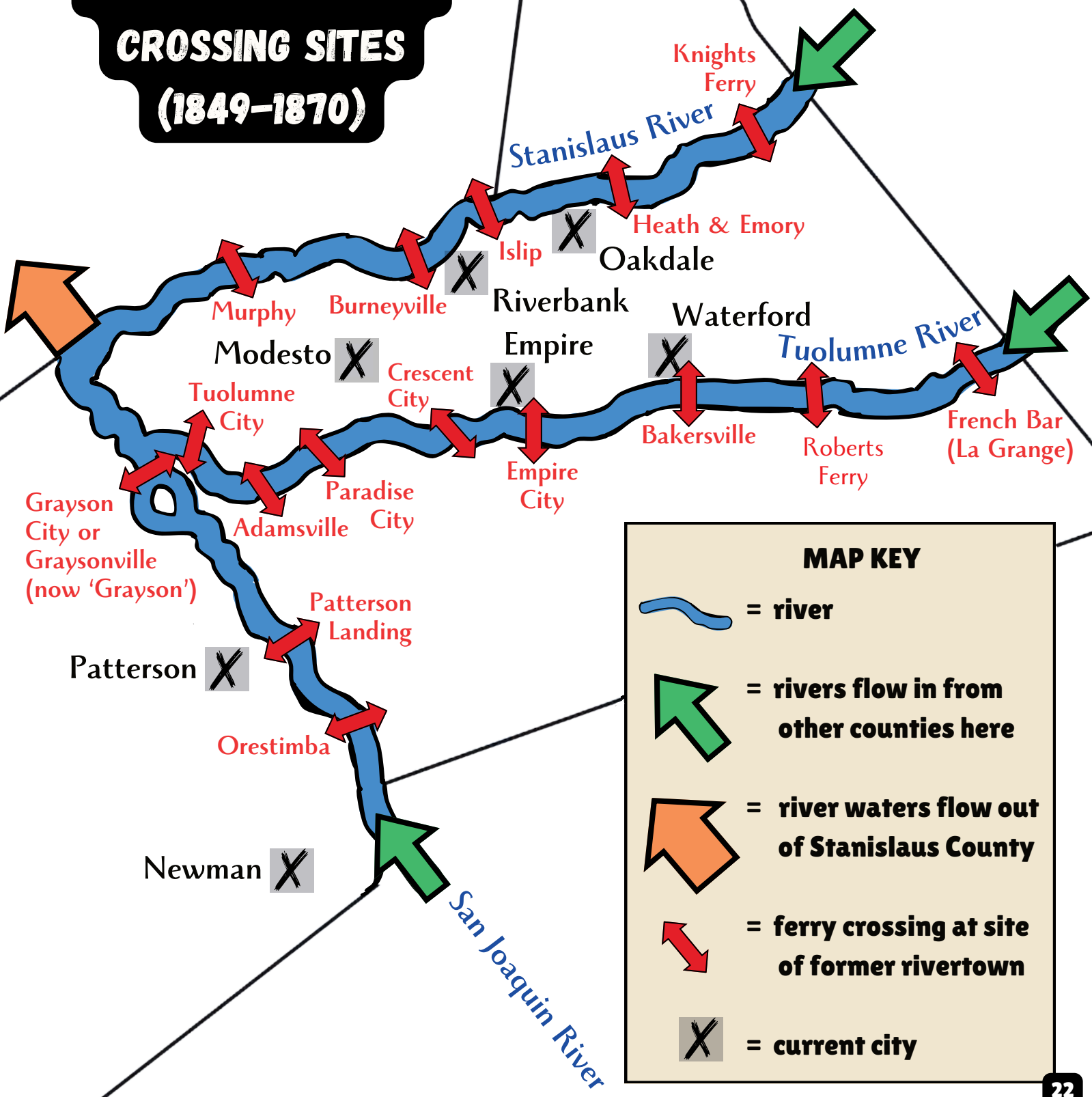
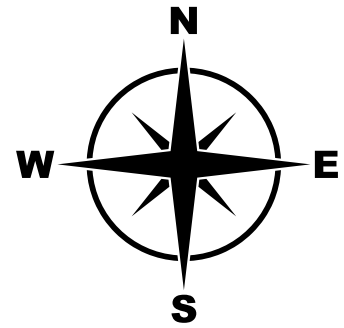
These photos are provided as courtesy from the McHenry Museum's archives.



a.) and b.) Floating ferry boats got people and goods across the rivers at rivertown sites throughout the county.

c.) Flat-bottomed steamboats ("steamers") transported wheat and other goods to port cities out of Stanislaus County.

**SOME OF
STAINSLAUS
COUNTY'S FORMER
RIVERTOWN FERRY
CROSSING SITES
(1849-1870)**



MAP KEY	
	= river
	= rivers flow in from other counties here
	= river waters flow out of Stanislaus County
	= ferry crossing at site of former rivertown
	= current city

LOCAL SCHOOLS

The first public school in Stanislaus County was established in 1854 on the west side of the county near Orestimba Creek at a place called Newsome's Bridge. At around the same time, Knights Ferry established its first school, which was mostly attended by children from the Dent, Lane, and Magee families. The original classroom in Knights Ferry was located inside of a horse stable! Students learned on one end and horses were housed on the other end. This temporary location was used until a more permanent structure was built.

Single-room schoolhouses formed all of the earliest classrooms in the county. Students of different grade levels were taught together in one room at the same time. Teachers wrote in white chalk on black slates (chalkboards). Students wrote on paper with lead-based wooden pencils and also used quills (feathers) and steel fountain pens dipped in wet ink to practice penmanship. Textbooks were expensive and hard to come by, so students had to share them with each other. A bucket of water was placed in the schoolhouse rooms, and children used a shared ladle from which to drink.

In 1874, the first major school building in the county was built in Modesto: the Fourteenth Street School; it was located between 'H' and 'I' streets. Teachers there taught first through eighth grade. Students were only in class for about three months of the year because they had to help their parents with agricultural farm duties during the other nine months of the year. The school had a playground on each side of it. One side was for boys and the other side was for girls.

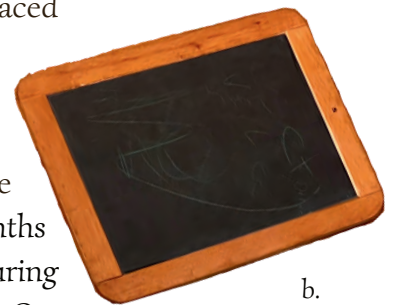
The county's first high school was established with the opening of Modesto High School in 1883. The first teacher and principal there was Thomas Downey.

The name origin of each Stanislaus County public school can be found online at McHenryMuseum.org.

Some of the antique items used by school children shown on this page are on display at the McHenry Museum.



a. **Steel fountain pens and a pen dipped in an ink well**



b. **Student chalk board**



c. **Water pail and ladle**



d. **Above and right: Fourteenth Street School**



e.



f.

Student seat and desk

RAILROAD AND MODESTO

In 1870, the Central Pacific Railroad built a rail line running north-south through the middle of Stanislaus County. When the county's first rail station site was selected, the new town of Modesto was built around it.

The new rail line helped local farmers send their wheat all over the United States. Warehouses were built along the railroad tracks. Grain was stored in the warehouses until it could be loaded onto the trains. Because rail was so efficient, the farmers stopped using the river boats to send their wheat to nearby port cities. Soon, the small towns along the rivers mostly died out. The towns along the railroad line grew in importance.

Modesto was going to be named for a banker, **William 'Chap' Ralston**, who was involved with funding for the railroad. Ralston "modestly" declined the invitation to have this new town named after him. Modesto is the Spanish word for 'modest' (meaning: not showing off), and so it was used as the town's name. Modesto became the county seat in 1871.

Mr. Ralston was one of the most important and richest men in the nation when he was alive. He made a large amount of money from the gold mines of California, and then even more money from the silver mines of Nevada. In fact, his mining wealth had partially helped fund the Union Army's victory in the Civil War, which kept the United States together in the 1860s. He founded the Bank of California. That bank's successor operations are now part of US Bank, which has local bank branches throughout the county today.

Modesto was a boomtown (a rapidly growing town due to sudden new fortune), and some of the buildings from nearby towns were literally picked up and moved here! Modesto was also lawless in its early years. There were gun shootouts regularly, especially on Front Street (now 9th Street in downtown Modesto). People said Modesto was more like the wild west in its early days than even the Gold Rush towns!

Stanislaus County's first train depot (station) was built in Modesto in 1870, but it burned down in 1884. This photo shows Modesto's third depot, built in 1915; the building is still used as a transportation center (at 9th and 'J' streets) today.

**William
'Chap'
Ralston**



b.



THE MCHENRY FAMILY

One important family in the early years of Stanislaus County was the McHenry Family. This family's time in the area started with Robert McHenry. He was a direct descendant of William Brewster who had sailed to America on the Mayflower in 1620 and was one of the leaders of the pilgrims at Plymouth Colony.

Born with the name Robert Henry Brewster, he was living in Ohio when he joined the U.S. Army to make his way to California. He deserted the army before arriving in Stanislaus County, and then changed his name so that the U.S. government could not track him down. He added a 'Mc' to his middle name of 'Henry' to create a new last name for himself: he would now be known as 'Robert McHenry.'

In Stanislaus County, **Robert McHenry** was a banker, rancher, and local government leader. The largest piece of his land was located near the Stanislaus River and it was called the Bald Eagle Ranch. He built a very large home for his family in Modesto in 1883. The house cost him \$10,000, which was a lot for a house in those days. The McHenry family lived in the home until 1920.

The McHenry family home was used as apartments from 1921 to 1976. It was then purchased by Julio & Aileen Gallo as a gift to the City of Modesto. The people of Modesto then restored the home to how it was when the McHenrys had lived there. The home is now known as the McHenry Mansion, and anyone can visit and tour it for free.

Robert McHenry had a son named Oramil. When Oramil McHenry died in 1906, he left \$20,000 and some land for the residents of Modesto to build a stand-alone library. The McHenry Library opened in 1912 and was the county's main library until 1971. In 1972, the building became the McHenry Museum. Artifacts from the county's historical past are on display here now. The museum is open to visitors for free.

The main north-south running boulevard in Modesto, McHenry Avenue, is also named after the family.



a. **Mayflower II (a Mayflower replica)**



b. **McHenry Mansion**



c. **McHenry Museum**

IRRIGATION

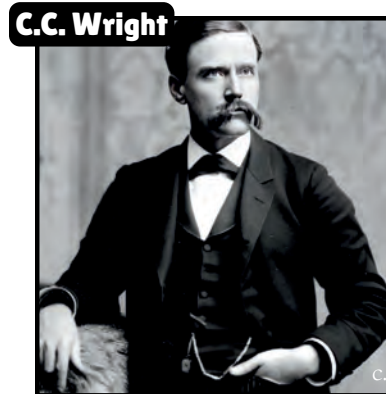
An important change in the county came when water from the rivers was brought to the land which was farmed. Bringing water to farms or otherwise dry land is called irrigation.

Here is how irrigation works: Water flow from a river is controlled by a large dam (a barrier constructed to hold back water), forming a reservoir. A canal (a man-made constructed waterway) then takes water from the reservoirs to farming areas. Finally, farmers make small ditches to get the water from the canals to their land.

Before the time of irrigation, local farmers could only grow crops like wheat, which did not need water in the summer. Local farmers wanted to bring water to their dry farms so they could grow different crops. They elected Christopher Columbus 'C.C.' Wright from Modesto to the California State Assembly. Once he was in office, C.C. Wright led the passage of the **Wright Act of 1887**. This act (an action taken to create a law) allowed irrigation districts, a form of local government, to be created in California so that farmers could control the water where they lived locally. That very law is still used as a model for creating irrigation districts by governments around the world today.

After the law was passed, Turlock Irrigation District (TID) and Modesto Irrigation District (MID) became the first two irrigation districts of their kind created in the state of California. TID and MID partnered to buy the Wheaton Dam on the Tuolumne River from Milton A. Wheaton, owner of the land and its dam. On that site, TID and MID built their own dam, the La Grange Dam, in 1893. Water from the mountains was saved in the reservoir behind the dam. In the summers, water was released and sent through canals for farmers to use.

The water now helped people locally in another way because electricity was made as the water passed through the dams. Electricity is the energy which now powers things like light bulbs, medical equipment, most cooking stoves, plug-in electronic devices, televisions, and computers. Other dams were built later.



The Don Pedro Dam (below) was built in 1923. The New Don Pedro Dam replaced this one in 1971.



IRRIGATED CROPS

With irrigation in place, farmers began growing crops that were more valuable than wheat. Alfalfa was soon widely planted. It was mainly used to feed dairy cows and other farm animals.

Later on, apple, cherry, and olive trees appeared. Stone fruit trees like apricots, nectarines, peaches, and plums were grown, as were citrus trees like lemons, limes, and oranges. Row crops including asparagus, beans, beets, berries, broccoli, lettuces, melons, and tomatoes filled the land. Grape vineyards were also planted. Ladino Clover became an important crop here for many decades in the first part of the 1900s; it was used to feed sheep.

In fact, these new crops, especially stone fruit trees and tomatoes, were so plentiful that canneries (factories where food is put into sealed cans) were built in the county to process the food to be shipped all over the world. Some canneries have been owned locally, and others have been owned by large national and international (worldwide) food companies.

Three fun facts: 1) Early independent American businesswoman Tillie Lewis, known as “the tomato queen”, operated a large tomato canning operation in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties from the 1940s to 1970s; 2) Tri-Valley Growers had the world’s largest-ever food cannery located by the Modesto-Stanislaus Airport for many decades before the year 2000; and 3) The next time you order a pizza, the tomato sauce on it may have come right from Stanislaus Foods, which still features the county’s name as its brand label!

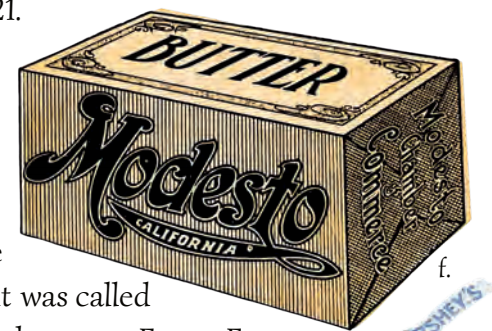
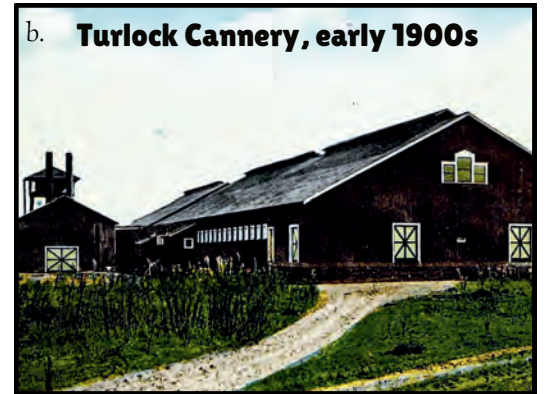
Nut trees, especially **almonds**, but also pistachios and walnuts, have become more widely planted in recent decades. The Central Valley is home to the world’s largest single-species ‘pollination event’ each year now. Stanislaus County is right in the middle of all this bee-buzzing activity when the almond blossoms bud every February. The biggest-ever bloom by acreage occurred in 2021.

ANIMAL FARMING

Along with growing plants for food, farm animals like chickens, dairy cows, hogs (fully grown pigs), and sheep were raised. The world’s one-time largest milk-cooperative was founded in Modesto. Butter and other dairy products carried the city’s name on brand labels. The county’s name was used by another company – it was called

Stanislaus Creamery. Also founded in Modesto was Foster Farms dairy (now Crystal Creamery) and **Foster Farms** poultry company, a major chicken processor, by Max and Verda Foster in 1939.

The area was so well known for its many dairies that in 1965 the Hershey Company opened a factory in Oakdale due to all of the fresh milk (used for making milk chocolate) nearby. Locals delighted in daily tours of the sweet-smelling place for decades. The factory building remains operational today, but it is no longer owned by Hershey.

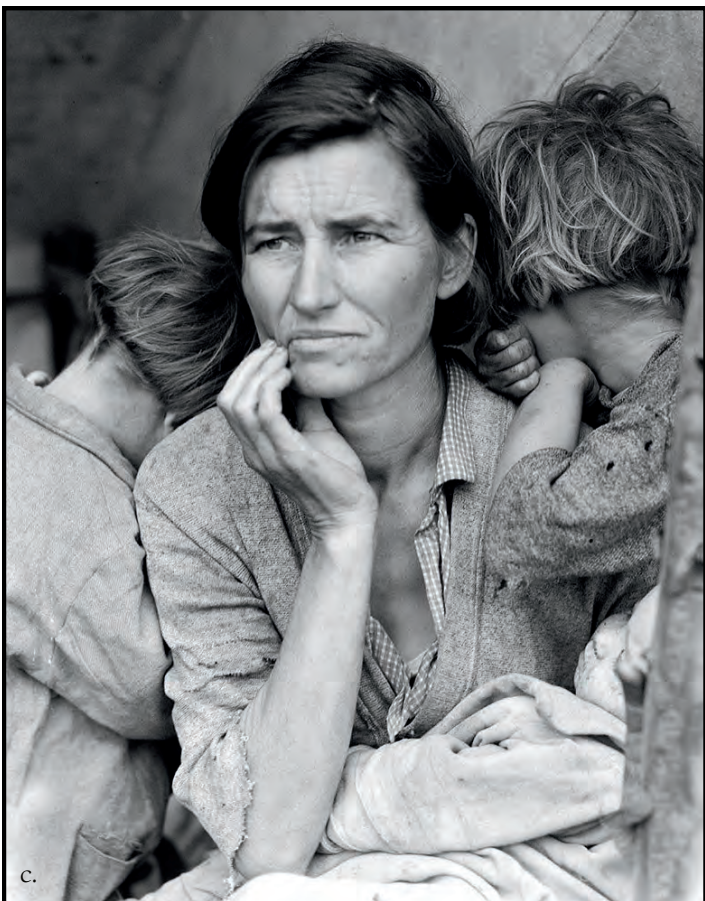


E & J GALLO WINERY

In September of 1933, Italian-American brothers **Ernest and Julio Gallo** opened the E&J Gallo Winery at 11th and 'D' streets in Modesto. They rented a building, redwood tanks, and a grape crusher to get started. Building upon their existing knowledge of how to make homemade wine, they learned more about commercial wine-making from a booklet they checked out at the McHenry Library in Modesto. Today, Gallo Winery is the largest family-owned winery in the world. People all over the world know Modesto as the home of Gallo Winery.



Brothers Ernest & Julio Gallo (above) built the world's largest family owned winery (left).



DUST BOWL

In the 1930s, a drought (a long period of little or no rainfall, leading to a shortage of water) combined with dry winds in creating major damage to the Great Plains of the U.S. This event was called the 'Dust Bowl,' and it caused over two million people to move from Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and mainly Oklahoma. They were called Okies (migrant farm workers from Oklahoma), but that term is now considered to be offensive.

The Dust Bowl migrants were mostly poor. Some came to California for agricultural work, including in Stanislaus County. The most famous photo of this time is called **Migrant Mother**. The woman in this photo was Florence Owens Thompson who eventually settled in Modesto. Many people in Stanislaus County have Dust Bowl family roots.

'Migrant Mother' (Florence Owens Thompson) by Dorothea Lange

IMMIGRATION

People have left their homes from all over the world to make Stanislaus County their home. Most have done this to improve their lives through the local work available to them here. Different religious practices, foods, and music have come with those who have immigrated.

A major immigration change happened in the 1940s during World War II. In 1941, the country of Japan attacked the United States' Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii. This caused the United States to order forced incarceration (imprisonment) of Japanese-Americans along the Pacific Coast. Many Japanese people had worked in agriculture in the U.S. so there became an immediate shortage of farm fieldworkers in California and other west coast states.

To fill these agriculture jobs, the U.S. government created the **Bracero Program** in 1942. This program gave people from Mexico a quick and legal way to do seasonal agricultural work here. Bracero means "one who works with his arms." The program started a large immigration wave of Mexican people coming to Stanislaus County. The Bracero program ended in 1964, but people from Mexico have continued to come to the county ever since.

Other people have arrived in our area for the cultural and religious freedoms of the United States. Some settled in Stanislaus County due to existing friends or family connections here. Some examples of this include people who have come from Eastern European countries to escape persecution and war, Cambodian people who have come to escape violence from a revolution, and Assyrian people who have come to escape persecution for their Christian faith in their ancestral Middle Eastern homelands.

Many people living in Stanislaus County maintain the traditions and practices passed down from their ancestors and forefathers who arrived here. Sharing these different customs and ways of life makes Stanislaus County a place of rich cultural diversity today. People in Stanislaus County have ancestors who have immigrated from these places and others:

- Asia - mainly from Cambodia, China, India, and Vietnam
- Central America - mainly from Mexico, and also from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras
- Europe - mainly from England, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal (mostly the Azores Islands), Sweden, Switzerland, and also from Eastern European countries
- Middle East - mainly from Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey
- Pacific Islands - including from Hawaii and the Philippines

**Migrant farm
workers in
May of 1943**



HIGHWAYS AND FREEWAYS



Highways and freeways are the main roads which connect vehicle travelers driving to and from towns and cities both within the county and out of the county. Stanislaus County's unique location makes it a short drive to many popular destinations - beaches, mountains, and major cities - via local highways and freeways.

In 1934, the California State Route highway system came into use:

- Highway 33 runs north-south on the west side of the county.
- Highway 99 first included 9th Street in Modesto and Golden State Boulevard in Turlock, but reopened in 1965 as a freeway.
- Highway 108 starts in Modesto and runs to the Sierra Nevada.
- Highway 120 connects the county eastward to the Sierra. To the west, it connects drivers to the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Highway 132 runs east-west through the center of the county.

Interstate 5 has been a national north-south freeway since 1967.

The highways and freeways which run through the county have influenced where houses and businesses are built over time. They have also led to a rise in commuters (people who travel some distance to work on a regular basis).

GEORGE LUCAS

Starting in the 1950s, teenagers would cruise their cars on some popular street routes. One of these teens was George Lucas, who graduated from Downey High School of Modesto in 1962. He became famous after he directed a movie in 1973 about local car cruising, titled **American Graffiti**. He used the word 'graffiti' to describe the car-cruising culture since he recognized that it was an art form, similar to drawn or painted graffiti (art which is written, painted, or drawn on a surface, usually without permission but in public view).

George Lucas' fame grew when he created **Star Wars** in 1977. One local connection he used for the science-fiction movie was the name of the furry 'Ewoks' in it: Ewok came from rhyming the word Miwok, who were the Indigenous Americans living near the local Yokuts 200 years ago. Lucas went on to direct many more movies but the *Star Wars* movie series and related media franchise is among the most popular in history. There is even a *Star Wars* "land" at Disneyland now.



George Lucas (left) directing a scene from 'American Graffiti'

'Star Wars' continues to be a popular cultural phenomena.



CONCLUSION

Stanislaus County has changed much over time, and quite rapidly during the last two hundred years. Yet, some things remain similar to the past. Most of the wildflowers and wild animals have been replaced by farmed plants and farm animals. The weather - with wet foggy winters and hot dry summers - generally remains the same though. The Yokuts have largely been replaced by the Americans and other immigrants who have come to America. The gold miners mainly became farmers. Riverboats were replaced by railroads. Irrigation allowed for farmers to replace wheat with other crops. Dirt roads were replaced by paved streets and highways. Food production factories and other businesses have provided important jobs. People have come from around the world for a better life here. The soil remains fertile.

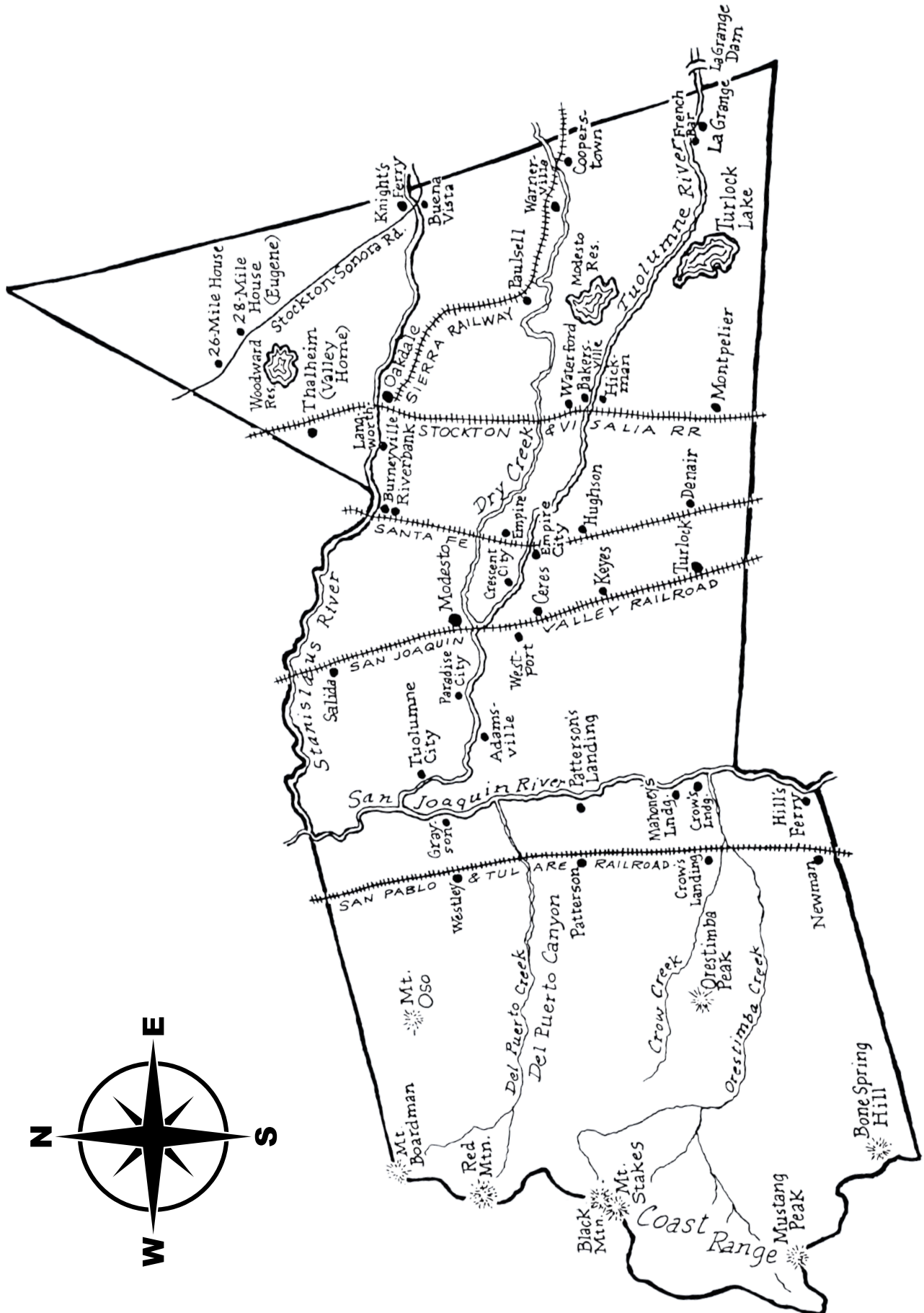
HOW YOU FIT IN

What have YOU learned about Stanislaus County? What would you like to explore more about on your own? Take this opportunity to write and share with a friend or your class.



An in-person visit to the McHenry Museum in Modesto goes well with the book you have just completed reading. The museum contains real artifacts from Stanislaus County history, and it's free to visit! The bookstore inside the museum sells gifts and books relating to the various topics of our local history.

Historical Sketch Map of Stanislaus County



StaniStory: Historical Summaries of Cities, Towns, and Other Communities in the County

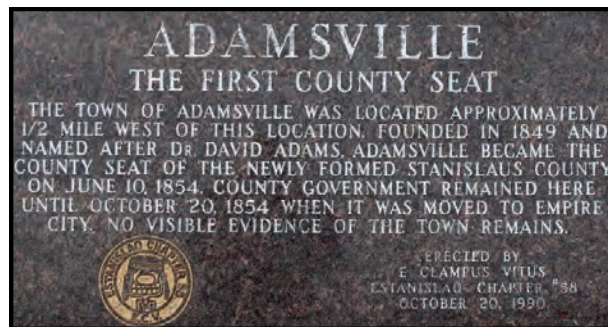
SOME EARLY TOWNS WHICH NO LONGER EXIST

IN ORDER OF DATE FOUNDED

Tuolumne City was founded in 1849 on the north bank of the Tuolumne River, five miles east of the San Joaquin River. It was a few miles southwest of where Modesto is located today. It was a ferry boat and barge destination town. It was the largest city in the county until Modesto came to be in 1870.

Crescent City was founded in 1849 on the south bank of the Tuolumne River, thirty miles east of the San Joaquin River. It was situated between where Modesto and Empire are now located today. Steamer boats could not reach the town though, so it had a short lifetime.

Adamsville was founded in 1849, and became the first Stanislaus County government seat in the spring of 1854. The first official government meeting was held under an oak tree here, and the first county courthouse was located in the town. It was named after its founder, Dr. David Adams. It was located on the south bank of the Tuolumne River, three miles east from Tuolumne City. It was an ideal location for shipping grain by river boats.



Adamsville marker set by E. Clampus Vitus.

Buena Vista was founded around 1850 by J.S. Grayson along the sides of the road which led to the covered bridge of Knights Ferry, on the south side of the Stanislaus River. Nearby, on 'Goat Hill,' there had been a sprawling Indigenous American 'Rancheria,' complete with a sweat lodge. By 1856, the town's population grew to have two saloons. At its peak, Buena Vista had an American settler population of fifty people and over one-hundred Indigenous Americans.

Empire City was founded in 1850 by John G. Marvin, who later became the first California Superintendent of Schools. In October of 1854, the town became the second county seat of Stanislaus County. The Great Flood of 1862 destroyed the town. However, the Santa Fe Railroad later brought back the town name when it created Empire one mile to the north of the old Empire City in 1896.

Langworth was founded in 1860 by a wealthy landowner, Henry Langworthy, and it was named for him. It was located halfway between what is now Oakdale and Riverbank. When a railroad to Oakdale was built in 1871, the town went into decline.

26 Mile House was founded in 1849, and was named such because it was 26 miles on an eastward route from Stockton. It was twelve miles north of Oakdale and it was an Irish settlement. It became part of Stanislaus County in 1860, but was destroyed in 1890 by a fire.

CITIES

IN ORDER OF DATE FOUNDED

Waterford was founded in 1857 by William Baker. It was originally known as Bakersville, but mail was being mistaken for the much larger Bakersfield, further south in California. The town was known for its ford (a shallow place where a river can be crossed), where the Robert's Ferry boat was used to cross the Tuolumne River. Most of the early townspeople were gold miners, and they decided on the name Waterford. The town's slogan is now the "Gateway to Recreation" for the area's outdoor activities.

Modesto was founded in 1870 when the Central Pacific Railroad purchased property from Solomon Alpaugh, John James Atherton, and Archibald Maze, to establish the county's first train station here. The city is home to the county's public community college, *Modesto Junior College*. It is regarded for its tree-lined streets, and the Modesto Ash tree originated in the city. The city's slogan is "Water, Wealth, Contentment, Heath." Modesto is known around the world as the home to Gallo Winery and as the birthplace of George Lucas.

Turlock was founded in 1871 by prominent Stanislaus County land owner John W. Mitchell. The first name choice for the city was 'Sierra,' but the U.S. postal service said no to that. The city's name derived from pioneer Henry Lander's reading of *Harper's Weekly*. That magazine featured a serial novel, 'Bred in the Bone,' which referenced a fictional town called 'Turlock.' The city importantly became a place for raising turkeys, melons, and other fruits. Turlock's annual melon carnival was first held in 1911, and by 1941 this festival had turned into the Stanislaus County Fair. The city is home to the county's public university, *California State University - Stanislaus*, and its early nickname was "Turkey Tech" for all the turkeys farmed nearby. The city's slogan is "Heart of the Valley" for its great agricultural production.

Oakdale was founded in 1871 when a railroad line reached the area. It was known as the "City of Clover" and later the "City of Almonds" for decades in the first part of the 1900s. A Hershey's chocolate plant drew visitors for tours when it was located there for many years. It is known as the "Cowboy Capital of the World" today, and a rodeo is held there the second weekend of each April.

Ceres was founded in 1874 when the Southern Pacific Railroad connected in the area. The original major landowner was Daniel Whitmore, and the city was named for the ancient Greek goddess of agriculture. "Together We Achieve" is the city's slogan.

Newman was founded in 1887, and was named for Simon Newman, a pioneer business merchant of the area. It was the center of the dairy industry of the **West Side** (the term by which locals call the western-populated part of Stanislaus County), and is also known for farming grain, cattle, and other crops. The town's slogan is "The Cream Pitcher of the Pacific" ('cream' from dairy cow milk).



Entrance to
University Circle
at CSU Stanislaus
in Turlock.

Riverbank was founded in 1895, but its story starts in 1852 when the Islip Ferry boat was used nearby to get people across the Stanislaus River. Major James Burney, the first sheriff of Mariposa County, purchased that ferry and moved it in the 1860s to a new site known as Burney's Ferry. The Riverbank Bridge is now located where Burney operated the ferry. The name soon changed to Burneyville. It was renamed Riverbank in 1910 when a railroad station was established in the town. The city became the hub of the world's largest tomato canning center. Riverbank's slogan is the "City of Action" for its civic-minded community efforts.

Hughson was founded in 1907 on the property of a large ranch owned by Modesto resident, Hiram Hughson. The dairy and peach industries became primary businesses of the community. Today, almonds and walnuts are mainly grown here. The city's motto is "A small community with a big heart!"

Patterson was founded in 1910 and named after John D. Patterson who had purchased the Rancho Del Puerto in 1864. That Rancho's deed was signed by President Abraham Lincoln. Planned by Patterson's son, Thomas, the city's streets are mapped to look like spokes in a wheel. The circular design was modeled after Paris, France, and palm trees line the grand entrance to it. The city became known as the "Apricot Capital of the World."



TOWNS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES IN ORDER OF DATE FOUNDED

Knights Ferry was founded in 1848 to 1849 by Captain William Knight. He created the town around his ferry boat operation there, which helped people get across the Stanislaus River as they traveled between the port city of Stockton and the gold mines of the Sonora area. The Knights Ferry Bridge was first built in 1857. After the 1862 flood, the bridge was rebuilt in 1863 as the longest covered bridge west of the Mississippi River in the U.S.

La Grange has its roots in 1848 to 1849 at a nearby site which was first called French Bar. It was here that a group of fifty men from France found gold in the Tuolumne River. By 1852, the Frenchmen had moved the townsite to its present location. La Grange means "the barn" in French.

Grayson was founded in 1849 by a group of seven men. The oldest of these men was Andrew Jackson Grayson, and so they named the city after him. Early on, it was known as Graysonville and is located on the west bank of the San Joaquin River.

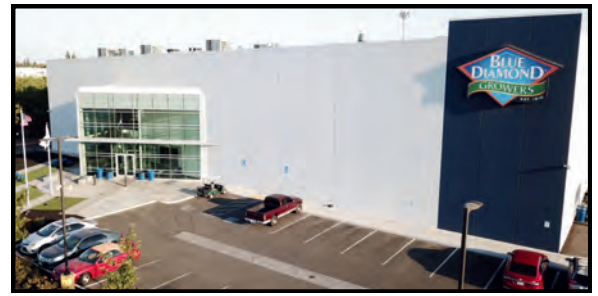
Hills Ferry was founded in 1849. It was named after Jesse Hill, who operated a ferry boat there for years. Hills Ferry is located west of where the Merced River runs into the San Joaquin River.

Roberts Ferry was first called Dickinson's Ferry in 1854 for the boat crossing which was run by brothers James and William Dickinson there. The namesake John Wesley Roberts had purchased the ferry in 1862.

Westley was founded in 1866 and was named after John Westley Van Benschoten. The town was established as a shipping point for local farmers and a large, prosperous, dry-farmed region of the county surrounded it.

Wood Colony was founded in 1869. It was named for Ebenezer "Eben" Wood, who purchased 1,760 acres here from Thomas Paige. The area was mostly settled by members of the Old German Baptist Brethren church. Jacob

Salida means “exit” in Spanish, and was founded in 1870 by the Central Pacific Railroad as the railroad’s northernmost exit in the county. As early as 1865, though, the area was known as Murphy’s Ferry. It was called so after John “one arm” Murphy who operated the ferry boat here for locals to cross the Stanislaus River.



Salida's Blue Diamond nut processing plant.

Valley Home was originally named Clyde when it was founded in 1871 as a train station site. The first people to settle the town were German immigrants from the Midwest in 1901. After a few years, the settlers changed the town’s name to Thalheim, which means “Home of the Valley” in the German language. Due to anti-German sentiment across America in the 1920s after WWI, locals updated the name to an English-language version for the town’s name by which we continue to call it today: Valley Home.

Crows Landing was started around 1870 by John Crow. It moved four miles to its current location in 1887 by the Santa Fe Railroad. The Crow family still lives in the area and grows walnuts there today. The town was known as the trading and shipping point between Newman and Patterson. Dairy and grain were the town’s main original farmed products.

Hickman was established in 1891 by the Southern Pacific Railroad. The town’s area was originally known as ‘Dallas’ because a man named Charles Dallas owned its land. It changed when Mr. Dallas’ daughter married a man named Louis Hickman, and the land was then donated to form the town.

Montpelier (or, Montpellier) was established in 1891. Named for a geographical crossroads on a Southern Pacific Railroad track, it was an early shipping point for grain farmers. At one point, more grain was shipped from Montpelier than any other place in the United States. Two schools existed at different times in the town.

Eugene was founded in 1892 by Irish immigrants and named after the postmaster’s son at the time. It was first called 28 Mile House because it was located two miles from the former 26 Mile House, which had been destroyed by a fire in 1890. (26 Mile House got its name because it was 26 miles on an eastward route from Stockton.) The population of the area has dwindled mainly since the Rosedale School, the only one in this area, closed in 1969.

Empire was established in 1896 by the Santa Fe Railroad. The name came from the former town of Empire City, located a mile away. It was originally populated by members of the Church of the Brethren from Indiana.

Orange Blossom was established in 1896 by the Lowry, Merrihew, and Shaffer pioneer families. Located on a namesake route to the Stanislaus River, Orange Blossom Road now winds its way from Highway 120 to the Knights Ferry Bridge. A school and a branch of the Stanislaus County Library once existed in the colony. The area had been known for its groves of orange trees. By 1929 sixty-five acres of such trees were planted.

Denair was founded in 1907 and was originally called Elmwood Colony. It was renamed after John Denair for his efforts in trying to convince the Santa Fe Railroad to use the location where the town is situated on the rail line for their roadhouse and machine buildings. The railroad ultimately selected Riverbank as the site for these building activities though.

Keyes was founded in 1913 and is located between Ceres and Turlock. It is remarked to have been named after Thomas J. Keyes, who was a California state senator from Stanislaus County in the 1870s.

Places to Visit



Fossil Discovery Center is a little more than an hour's drive south from most Stanislaus County locations. It features the discovery of magnificent fossils which were made at the Fairmead Landfill in Chowchilla (Madera County), the site of one of the largest middle-Pleistocene fossil excavations in North America. Fossils from animals which roamed the San Joaquin Valley are here: mammoth, smilodon, sloth, dire wolf, camel, and horse.

19450 Ave 21 1/2 • Chowchilla CA 93610

(559) 665-7107 • maderamammoths.org

Great Valley Museum and Planetarium at Modesto Junior College's West Campus contains over 200 taxidermy specimens and objects focusing on the five existing habitats found in California before colonial settlement and agricultural expansion, dated pre-1800. The displays feature plants and animal specimens from different habitats and showcase the indigenous Miwok and Yokuts.

2201 Blue Gum Ave • Modesto CA 95358

(209) 575-6196 • mjc.edu/instruction/sme/gvm

Knights Ferry Recreation Area is just east of Knights Ferry and has a very mild 1.5 mile hiking trail loop. It includes sights of the old flour mill (later converted into a hydroelectric station), an old post office, the 1863 Knights Ferry Covered Bridge, and views of the lower part of Goodwin Canyon on the Stanislaus River. An information center shares about the town's history, salmon migrations, and details on local flora and fauna.

17968 Covered Bridge Rd • Oakdale CA 95361

(209) 881-3517 • knightsferry.com

McHenry Museum in Modesto engages visitors with the rich and diverse history of Stanislaus County by showcasing displays of the Yokuts, local gold mining, original fire fighting equipment, 1900s home furnishings, an old county recorder's office, an antique general store, a recreated blacksmith shop, and temporary exhibits.

1402 "I" Street • Modesto CA 95354

(209) 618-5387 • mchenrymuseum.org

San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge is 7,500-acres in size. It is situated where the three rivers of Stanislaus County (Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin) join, creating ideal conditions for wildlife and plant diversity. The refuge is managed with a focus on migratory birds, endangered species, and riparian and wetland habitat restoration. Visitors can bring picnic lunches and enjoy miles of easy walking paths.

Pelican Trailhead and Parking: 2714 Dairy Road • Vernalis CA 95385

(209) 826-3508 • fws.gov/refuge/san-joaquin-river

Additional Reading

Illustrated fiction books for kids

Over in the Valley by Linda Knoll in 2010 is based on the lyrical tune of the traditional children's song, 'Over in the Meadow.' Focusing on the animals which inhabit the San Joaquin Valley, it doubles as a counting book with the animals featured increasing by one for each page.

Patient for Pumpkins by Linda Knoll in 2014 is set in the Modesto Farmer's Market and tells the year-long tale of how a pumpkin grows. Other bountiful produce which is grown in Stanislaus County is featured as the story's young protagonist awaits pumpkin harvest time in the fall.

Twelve Days of Central Valley Christmas by Ken White in 2017 is a children's picture book that retells the traditional Christmas carol from a unique Central Valley of California point-of-view.

Additional books are available at the gift shop bookstore located within the McHenry Museum and at Stanislaus County Library branches.

Chapter books for kids

In the 1990s, local author Margaret Hinson Bell wrote a series of six books based on Stanislaus County history at the request of Modesto City Schools and the McHenry Museum & Historical Society. Several are available for purchase at the gift shop bookstore located within the McHenry Museum: *To Ceres and Keyes with Marcie and Rick*, *To Knights Ferry with Marcie and Rick*, *To Oakdale and Valley Home with Marcie and Rick*, *To Modesto with Marcie and Rick*, *To Riverbank and Salida with Marcie and Rick*, and *To Turlock with Marcie and Rick*.

For older students and adults -

Stanislaus Stepping Stones (1976 - 2019) and *Museum Monthly* (2020 - present) are periodic publications by the McHenry Museum & Historical Society. They are available to download for free at McHenryMuseum.org.

Additional books on Stanislaus County history can be found at the gift shop bookstore located within the McHenry Museum, in the Special Collections room of the Stanislaus County Library branch in Modesto, and in the Special Collections university archives of the CSU Stanislaus Library.

A complete list of countywide books on Stanislaus County history is available online at McHenryMuseum.org.



Location-Specific Information

In addition to the McHenry Museum & Historical Society, which covers the entirety of Stanislaus County history, these location-specific organizations throughout the county focus on their respective areas:

Ceres Historical Society, City of Modesto's Culture Commission and Landmark Preservation Commission, Denair Historical Society, Hughson Historical Society, Knights Ferry Museum, La Grange Museum, Modesto History Center, Modesto Police Historical Society, Newman Historical Society and Newman Museum, Oakdale Museum & History Center, Patterson Historical Society, Riverbank Historic Museum, Turlock Historical Society, and the Waterford Museum.

StaniStory: Glossary

Defined Concepts and Words

Act - An action taken to create a law. (page 26)

Alta California - A large land territory which includes what is now California and several other western U.S. states; “alta” means ‘upper’ or ‘high’ in Spanish. (page 14)

Animal Branding - Refers to heating up a piece of iron which has a certain design, letter, or logo on it, and then marking the cattle or large stock of animal with it. (page 20)

Bandito(s) - The Spanish language work meaning bandit(s), or outlaw(s). (page 17)

Baptized - Religiously accepted by a church in a ceremony. (page 11)

Bar - A piece of land formed by sand or gravel deposited from a river or other body of water. (page 18)

Boomtown - A rapidly growing town due to sudden new fortune. (page 24)

Californios - Descendants of Spanish or Mexican settlers in California in the 1700s - 1800s. (page 14)

Canneries - Factories where food is put into sealed cans. (page 27)

Cannonballs - The round shot fired from large guns. (page 12)

Canal - A man-made constructed waterway. (page 26)

Catholic - A Christian religious institution. (page 11)

Commuters - People who travel some distance to work on a regular basis. (page 30)

Convert - Adopt a set of beliefs which are particular to a certain religion. (page 10)

County Seat - The town or city where a county’s local government is located. (page 1)

Dam - A barrier constructed to hold back water. (page 26)

Diablo - The Spanish-language word for “devil.” (page 11)

Dredge - To scoop out mud and debris. (page 19)

Drought - A long period of little to no rainfall, leading to a shortage of water. (page 27)

Dry Farmed - Relying on rain only to grow certain crops. (page 20)

Earth’s Mantle - An underground rocky part of the earth between its surface and hot liquid core. (page 2)

Electricity - The energy which now powers things like light bulbs, medical equipment, most cooking stoves, plug-in electronics, and televisions. (page 26)

Foreshadowed - An indication of future events. (page 11)

Ford - A shallow place where a river can be crossed (page 34)

Frontiersmen - People who explore unsettled lands. (page 13)

Fur Trappers - People who catch and kill wild animals to sell their fur. (page 13)

Genre - A certain type of fiction writing. The term also refers to categories of other artistic work. (page 19)

Graffiti - Art which is written, painted, or drawn on a surface, usually without permission but in public view. (page 30)

Grassland - A land area covered by grass. (page 4)

Indigenous Americans - The people who first inhabited the land which is now the United States. Other similar terms are First Peoples, Native Americans (the official U.S. government wording), and Native Peoples. (page 6)

Irrigation - Bringing water to farms or otherwise dry land. (page 26)

Land Grants - Pieces of land which a government gives to a person or group of people. (page 14)

Leeward Side - The downwind area. (page 4)

Loam - Fertile soil made up of about equal parts of sand, silt, and clay. (page 3)

Local Color - Writing about characters with typical customs, manner of speech, clothing, and features of a certain place and time. (page 19)

Mission - A Christian religious community with buildings for housing, work, and prayer. (page 10)

Modesto - The Spanish-language word for ‘modest,’ which means not showing off. (page 24)

Mormons - A Christian-based religious and cultural group. (page 16)

Obsidian - A glass rock formed from the cooling of volcanic lava. (page 8)

Okies - Migrant farm workers from Oklahoma. (page 28)

Olivella - Shells which are small like an olive. (page 8)

Orestimba - A Yokuts word which means “meeting place.” (page 15)

Padres - A Catholic priest is called a ‘Father,’ and the word for father in Spanish is ‘padre.’ (page 11)

Pioneers - The first people to explore or settle an area. (page 16)

Radiation Fog - A thick fog that settles on the valley floor after large amounts of rain. (page 4)

Rain Shadow - A mountainous region which blocks much rainfall. (page 4)

Reservoirs - Lakes used as a source of water supply when it’s needed. (page 3)

Steam Boat Barges - Flat-bottomed boats powered by steam, nicknamed “steamers.” (page 21)

Tributaries - Rivers or streams which flow into other rivers or into another body of water. (page 3)

Tule is pronounced “too-lee” and is named after the tule bulrush sedge plants found in the valley. (page 4)

Wigwams - Round, domed huts. (page 6)

Windward Side - The direction from where the wind blows. (page 4)

Yokuts - This word means “people” in the Yokutsan language. (page 6)

Yokutsan - The language of the Yokuts, who were the Indigenous Americans of Stanislaus County. (page 6)

StaniStory: Glossary

Key Facts

- Agriculture (or, “ag”)** - The primary local land use; Stanislaus County ranks in the U.S.’s top 10 for ag production value. (page 1)
- Almonds** - An important widely-planted crop in Stanislaus County today. (page 27)
- American Graffiti** - 1973 film by director George Lucas, which celebrates Modesto’s car cruising culture. (page 30)
- Bracero Program** - A program to fill agricultural jobs during World War II which gave people from Mexico a quick and legal way to enter the United States. (page 29)
- Bret Harte** - American author who lived and taught school in the town of La Grange. (page 19)
- California Mammoth** - A large animal who inhabited now-Stanislaus County for millions of years until 10,000 years ago. (page 5)
- Central Valley** - The central portion of Stanislaus County is its largest land area; the valley extends north and south beyond the county. (page 2)
- Chinese** - About half of the 2,000 people who inhabited La Grange were gold miners from China in the early 1850s. (page 18)
- Diablo Range** - Part of this mountain range makes up the western portion of Stanislaus County. (page 2)
- El Camino Viejo** - Translating to “The Old Road” in Spanish, this trail was created and used by Spanish missionaries and soldiers; it cut through the Diablo Mountains of Stanislaus County and was in use by at least the year 1780. (page 10)
- Ernest and Julio Gallo** - Wine-making brothers who opened the E&J Gallo Winery in Modesto in 1933. (page 28)
- Estanislao** - The name given by missionaries to local Yokuts boy born as ‘Cucunuchi;’ he was renamed after Stanislaus of Poland, a Catholic Saint who died in 1079; the English-version of this name is ‘Stanislaus,’ and it is our county’s namesake. (page 11)
- Foster Farms** - Major national poultry processing company founded in Stanislaus County in 1939. (page 27)
- Gabriel Moraga** - Explorer who led the first Spanish expedition to purposely explore land which is now Stanislaus County. (page 10)
- Gold Rush** - People from all over the world came to California in 1849 in search of gold. (page 17)
- Great Flood of 1862** - Heavy rain caused the largest flood and worst recorded natural disaster in Stanislaus County history. (page 18)
- Hadrosaur** - Fossils of this duck-billed dinosaur were the first-ever reported dinosaur remains discovered in California; local teenager Allen Bennison came across them in Del Puerto Canyon in 1936. (page 5)
- Indigenous Americans** - The people who lived in now-Stanislaus County more than 10,000 years exclusively. (page 1)
- Joaquin Murrieta** - The most famous of the Mexican banditos in California. (page 17)
- ‘King of Wheat’** - Modesto and Stanislaus County’s nickname starting in the mid-1870s due to all the wheat grown here. (page 20)
- Knights Ferry** - Stanislaus County’s prominent Gold Rush-era mining town on the Stanislaus River. (page 18)
- La Grange** - Stanislaus County’s prominent Gold Rush-era mining town on the Tuolumne River. (page 18)
- Mediterranean** - Stanislaus County climate (hot dry summers, mild wet winters); named for sea between Europe and Africa (page 4)
- Mexico** - This country owned the land which is now Stanislaus County from 1821 - 1848. (page 1)
- Migrant Mother** - Iconic Great Depression era photo by Dorothea Lange of Florence Thompson Owens. (page 28)
- Miwok** - Some members of this Indigenous Americans tribe would live adjacent to the Lakisamni-Yokuts at a certain time of year near the area which is now the town of Knights Ferry. (page 6)
- Mosasaur** - A pre-historic aquatic lizard whose fossilized remains were discovered in Stanislaus County. (page 5)
- Ranchos** - The Spanish-language name of land grants given out in Alta California by Mexico (mid-1840s for Stanislaus). (page 14)
- Robert McHenry** - A prominent banker, rancher, and local government leader in Stanislaus County’s early days. (page 25)
- San Joaquin River** - This river runs south to north through the middle of Stanislaus County as it approaches the Delta. (page 3)
- San Joaquin Valley** - The southern valley of the larger Central Valley area; known as the “breadbasket of the world” (page 2)
- Spain** - This European country claimed and then ruled the land which is now Stanislaus County from 1806 - 1821 (page 1)
- Stanislaus County** - This county in central California was created as a carve-out of Tuolumne County in 1854 (page 19).
- Stanislaus River** - This river runs east to west in the northeast part of the county as a tributary to the San Joaquin River. (page 3)
- Star Wars** - Since 1977, this film series franchise is the creation of Modesto born-and-raised filmmaker, George Lucas. (page 30)
- Sierra Nevada** - The foothills of this mountain range extend into the eastern part of Stanislaus County. (page 2)
- Tule Fog** - Pronounced “too-lee,” this is a ‘radiation’ type of fog named after the local ‘tule’ plant. (page 4)
- Tules** - Hard stem bulrush sedge plants found in wet, marshy areas; they look like tall clumps of thick grass. (page 7)
- Tuolumne River** - This river runs east to west in the central part of the county as a tributary to the San Joaquin River. (page 3)
- Ulysses S. Grant** - Future United States president who made visits to Knights Ferry after marrying Julia Dent. (page 18)
- United States of America** - The land which is now Stanislaus County has been part of this country since 1848. (page 1)
- West Side** - The term by which locals call the western-populated part of Stanislaus County. (page 34)
- William ‘Chap’ Ralston** - This wealthy banker who was too ‘modest’ to have Modesto named in his honor. (page 24)
- William Knight** - A medical doctor and explorer who founded the town of Knights Ferry in the late 1840s. (page 18)
- William Tecumseh Sherman** - A one-time co-owner of Rancho Thompson who later became a famous American Civil War general for the Union Army. (page 15)

Wright Act of 1887 - This law written by Modesto's C.C. Wright gave farmers local irrigation control across California. (page 26)

Yokuts - The tribal name of the Indigenous Americans who lived in now-Stanislaus County and the San Joaquin Valley. (page 6)

Zorro - A fictional character believed to be inspired by Joaquin Murrieta, and/or by Estanislao and Yoscolo. (page 12)

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READ BEFORE PROCEEDING!

It is strongly encouraged to leave the following 'Assessments & Activities' pages in this book blank (**do NOT fill them out**) so that multiple people have the opportunity to fully use them. They have been included in this book as a reference to examine the additional learning exercises which are offered.

Go to McHenryMuseum.org/stanistory to download and print out the 'StaniStory Assessments and Activities ONLY' packet for individual student use.



**Appendix:
Assessments &
Activities**

StaniStory Review Questions Part 1 (pages 1 – 16)

- 1. From 1821–1848 California was under the control of which country?**
 - a. Mexico
 - b. Spain
 - c. France
 - d. The United States
- 2. The _____ is the western portion of Stanislaus County, which is part of the Coast Ranges of California:**
 - a. Diamond Range
 - b. Dexter Range
 - c. Diablo Range
 - d. Delta Range
- 3. Which is NOT a river which flows in Stanislaus County?**
 - a. Stanislaus River
 - b. Missouri River
 - c. Tuolumne River
 - d. San Joaquin River
- 4. Without irrigation, Stanislaus County is considered a _____?**
 - a. Desert
 - b. Grassland
 - c. Forest
 - d. Wetland
- 5. Which prehistoric animal of Stanislaus County can be found in the movie 'Ice Age'?**
 - a. California Mammoth
 - b. California Elephant
 - c. California Triceratops
 - d. California Monkey
- 6. The Indigenous Americans in Stanislaus County were part of which tribe?**
 - a. Yokuts
 - b. Lakota
 - c. Cherokee
 - d. Pequots
- 7. Which trees contain plentiful acorns?**
 - a. Pine
 - b. Sequoia
 - c. Oak
 - d. Elm
- 8. Which glass rocks were used to make arrowheads?**
 - a. Granite
 - b. Jasper
 - c. Limestone
 - d. Obsidian

9. Who was the Spanish explorer to first come to Stanislaus County?

- a. Gabriel Moraga
- b. Christopher Columbus
- c. Hernán Cortés
- d. Ricardo Montalbán

10. Who is Stanislaus County named for?

- a. Stanley Adams
- b. Chief Estanislao
- c. Stanislaus Friedman
- d. Stanisloa Ortega

11. Which folk hero originates from early Spanish California?

- a. Zorro
- b. Robin Hood
- c. Juan Cortina
- d. Superman

12. Which famous American Civil War General was a co-owner of the Rancho Thompson?

- a. Stonewall Jackson
- b. Ulysses S. Grant
- c. William Tecumseh Sherman
- d. Omar Bradley

13. Who is NOT a famous frontiersman of Stanislaus County?

- a. Faxon Atherton
- b. John C. Frémont
- c. Jedediah Smith
- d. Kit Carson

14. Jose Castro and Francisco Rico owned which original Rancho?

- a. Del Rio Estanislao
- b. Pescadero
- c. Orestimba y Las Garzas
- d. Thompson

15. The Mormons began which colony just outside of Stanislaus County?

- a. New Era
- b. God's Land
- c. South Fork
- d. New Hope

StaniStory Review Questions Part 2 (pages 17 – 29)

1. Who was the most famous of all California banditos?

- a. Three Fingered Jack
- b. Jesse James
- c. José Alfonso
- d. Joaquin Murrieta

2. In what year was the California Gold Rush?

- a. 1847
- b. 1848
- c. 1849
- d. 1850

3. Stanislaus County was carved out of which existing County?

- a. Tuolumne
- b. San Joaquin
- c. Calaveras
- d. Merced

4. Which future U.S. president visited his family-by-marriage, the Dents of Knights Ferry?

- a. Abraham Lincoln
- b. Andrew Johnson
- c. Ulysses S. Grant
- d. Rutherford B. Hayes

5. Which Stanislaus County town was originally called French Bar?

- a. Knights Ferry
- b. La Grange
- c. Turlock
- d. Ceres

6. Which author lived and taught elementary school locally before Stanislaus County was established?

- a. John Steinbeck
- b. Charles Dickens
- c. Bret Harte
- d. Mark Twain

7. Prior to irrigation, Stanislaus County was known agriculturally as the _____?

- a. King of Alfafa
- b. King of Wheat
- c. Duchess Dairy
- d. Queen Corn

8. The _____ transported wheat across the shallow rivers of Stanislaus County:

- a. Submarines
- b. Tugboats
- c. Flat Bottom Barges
- d. Surf Boards

9. This man was too 'modest' to have Modesto named after him:

- a. Charles Crocker
- b. Leland Stanford
- c. William Ralston
- d. William Sharon

10. This family, whose name is found throughout Modesto, had ancestors who sailed on the 'Mayflower':

- a. Maze
- b. McHenry
- c. Elias
- d. Gallo

11. Who was the California Assemblyman that introduced the 1887 law allowing for local irrigation control?

- a. D.W. Griffith
- b. C.B. DeMille
- c. C.C. Wright
- d. W.C. Fields

12. Which poultry company is the national chicken processor that got its start in Stanislaus County?

- a. Tyson Foods
- b. Foster Farms
- c. McDonald's
- d. Zacky Farms

13. These are the first names of the two Italian-American brothers who opened a winery in Modesto in 1933:

- a. Tony and Nunzio
- b. Mario and Luigi
- c. Ernest and Julio
- d. Dolce and Gabbana

14. What is the given name of the Great Depression photo of Florence Owens Thompson and her children?

- a. Poor Lady
- b. Tired Mother
- c. Migrant Mother
- d. Agriculture Life

15. This gave people from Mexico a quick and legal way to come to the United States to work in agriculture:

- a. Bracero Program
- b. Piez Plan
- c. Tedos Administration
- d. Programa de Manos

Bonus Question: Which famous filmmaker from Modesto created 'Star Wars'?

- a. James Cameron
- b. Wes Anderson
- c. George Lucas
- d. Ida Lupino

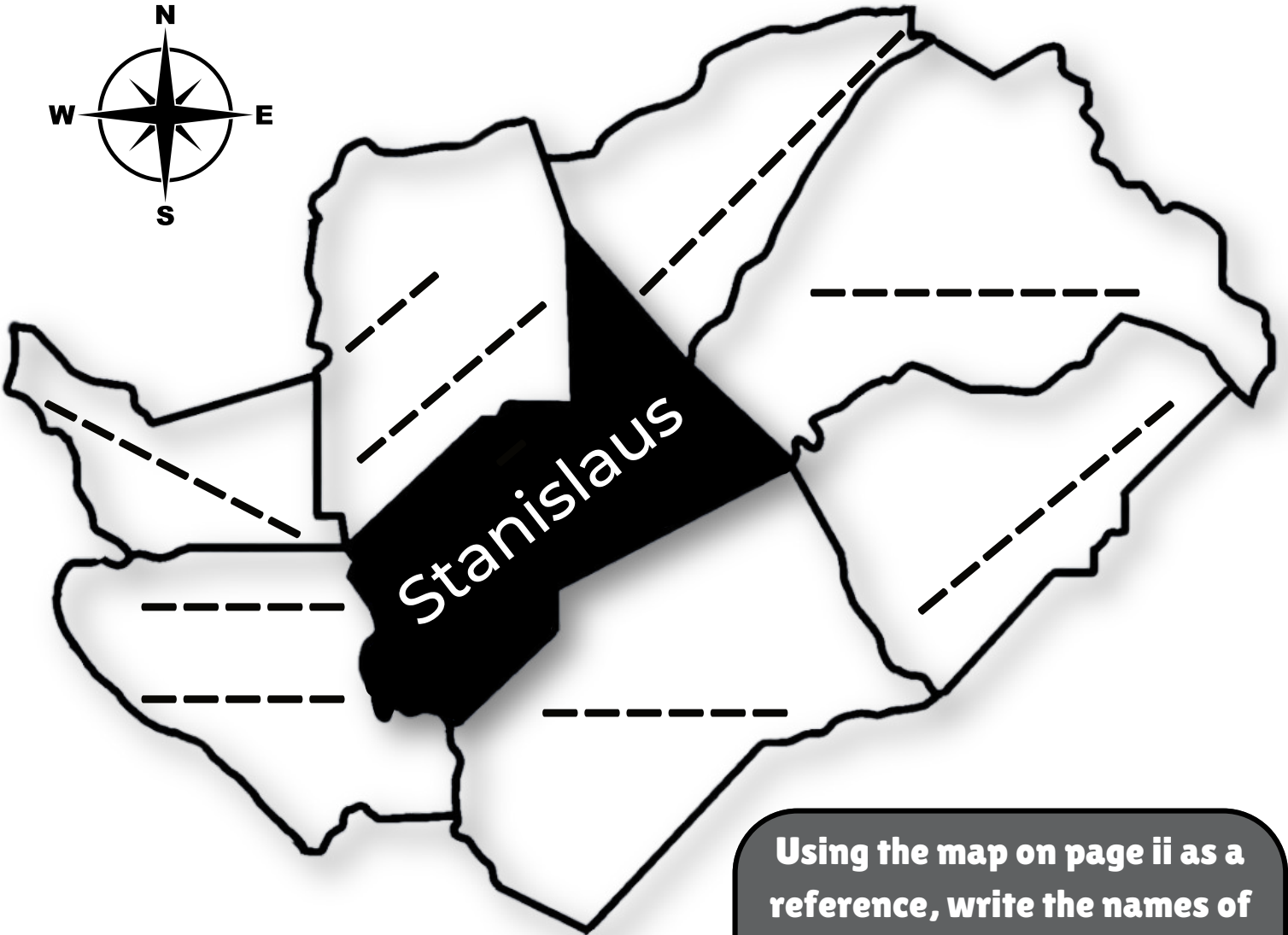
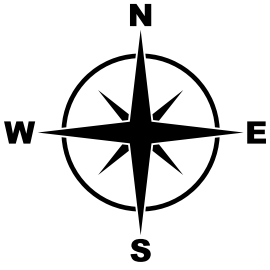
StaniStory Word Search

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S T A R W A R S B B P P W T Y J P C M T

WORD BANK:

ALMONDS BOOMTOWN CANNERIES
CATTLE COMMUTERS IRRIGATION STANISLAUS
STAR WARS TULE YOKUTS ZORRO

Identify Neighboring Counties



The detailed area in this map of California is enlarged above.

Using the map on page ii as a reference, write the names of the counties which neighbor Stanislaus:

Alameda

Calaveras

Mariposa

Merced

San Joaquin

Santa Clara

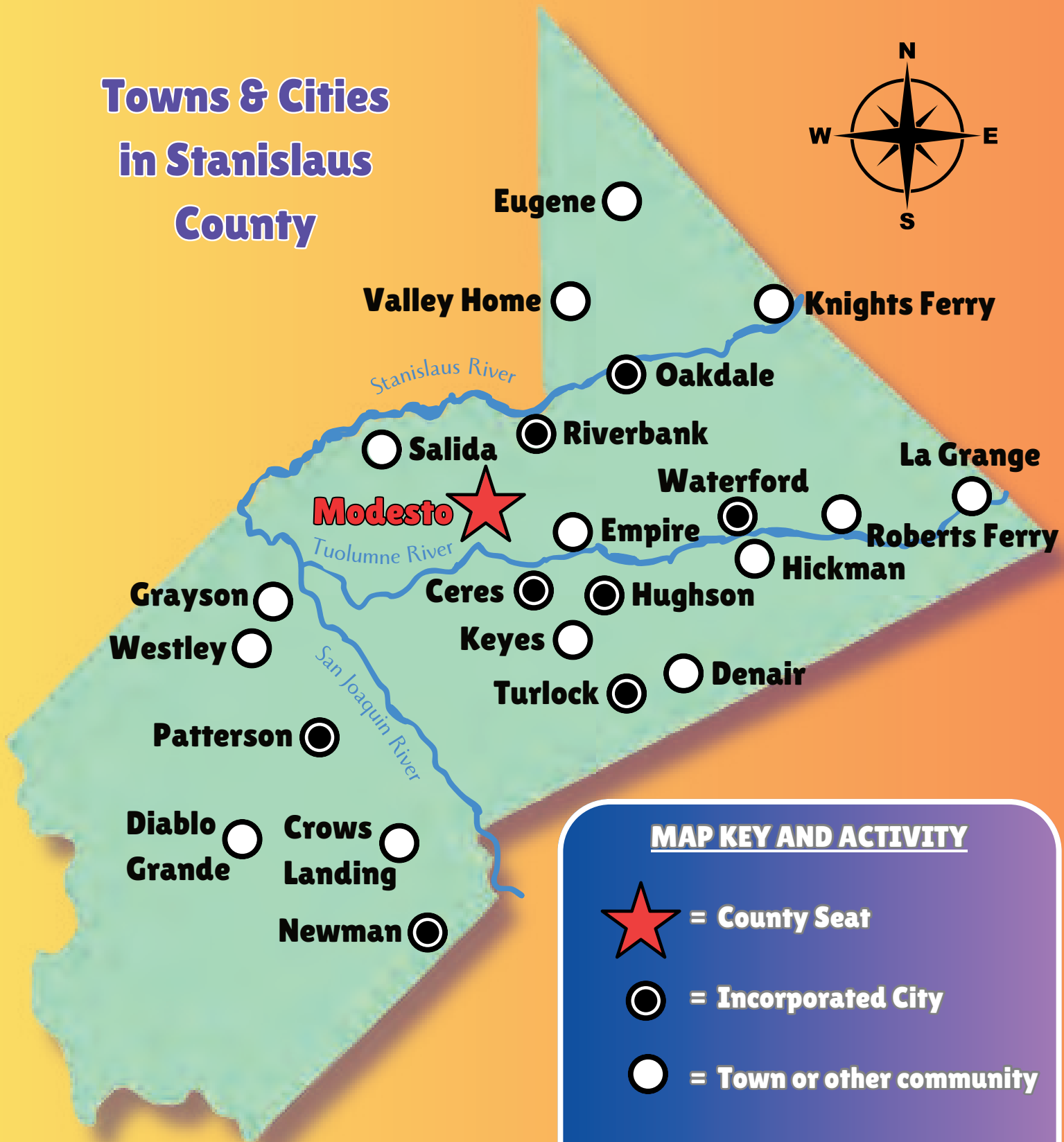
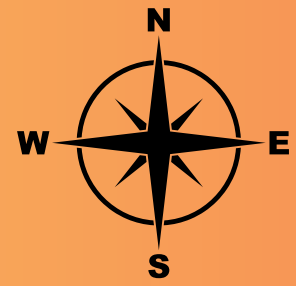
Tuolumne

Cattle

Draw a picture of a cow that would have been raised during the early years of cattle farming in Stanislaus County.

**What would your cattle brand have looked like?
Draw your own design!**

Towns & Cities in Stanislaus County



MAP KEY AND ACTIVITY

- = County Seat
- = Incorporated City
- = Town or other community

Circle the city or town where you live (or the nearest one if you live in a community not shown on this map). Underline any cities you recognize.

Labeling Highways and Freeways

Using the map on page 30 as a reference, label the highways and freeways on this map:

5	33
99	108
120	132

County Seats

The county seat is home to the main courthouse of the local government. The courthouse that was built in Modesto in 1873 is shown (to the right). The modern one (below) replaced it in the 1960s. A larger courthouse opens in 2024 (bottom right).



Put the towns and cities in order of when they became the Stanislaus County seat (local government center):

Modesto

Adamsville

La Grange

Knights Ferry

Empire City

1. 1854 _____

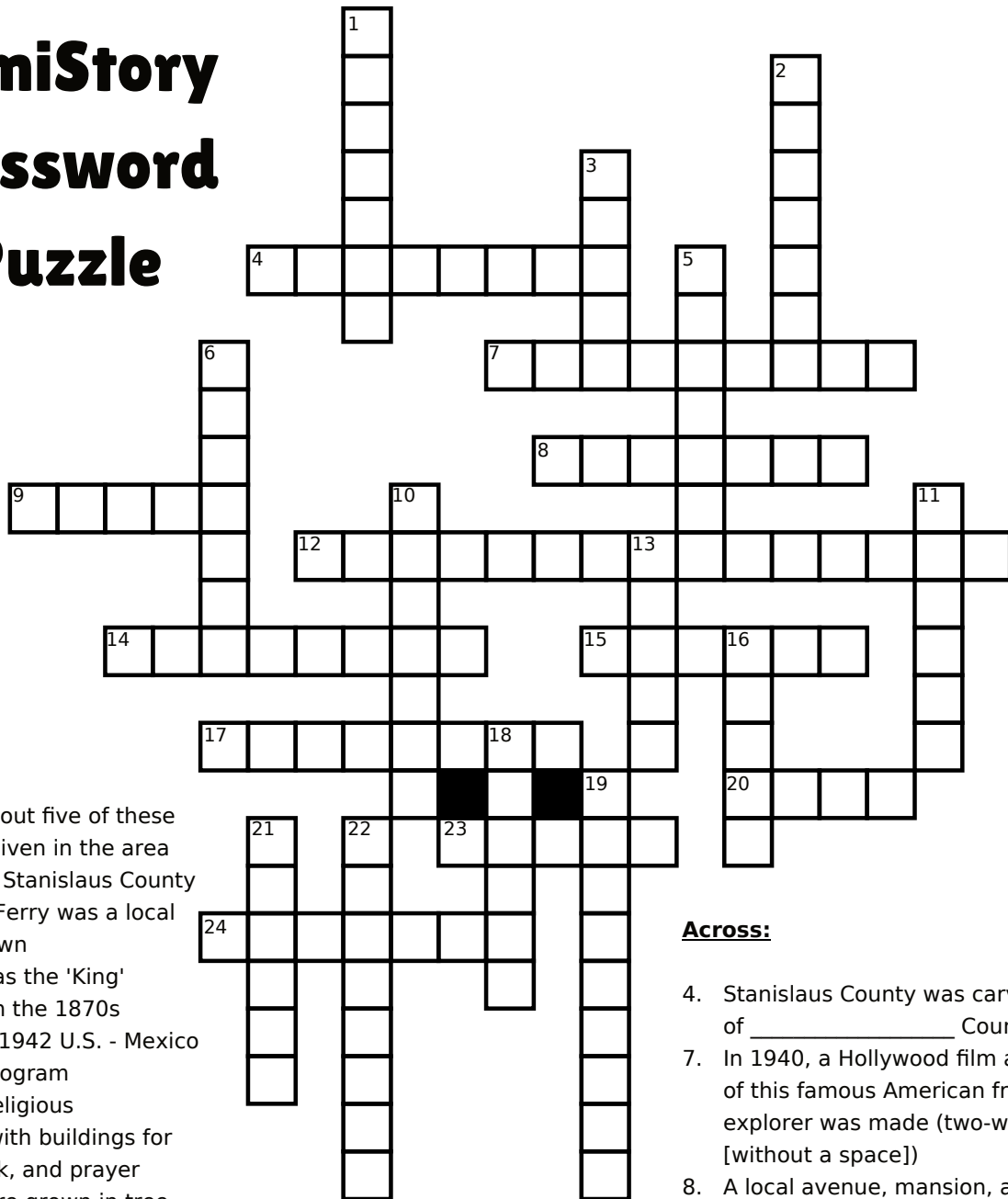
2. 1854 _____

3. 1855 _____

4. 1862 _____

5. 1871 _____

StaniStory Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. Mexico gave out five of these land grants given in the area which is now Stanislaus County
2. _____ Ferry was a local Gold Rush town
3. Stanislaus was the 'King' of this crop in the 1870s
5. Name of the 1942 U.S. - Mexico farm labor program
6. A Christian religious community with buildings for housing, work, and prayer
10. These nuts are grown in tree orchards across the county now
11. Tribe name of Indigenous Americans who lived throughout Stanislaus County
13. The number of fingers on one of Manuel "Jack" Garcia's hands became part of his nickname
16. Last name of brothers Ernest & Julio who started their Modesto winery in 1933
18. These are the nuts of oak trees
19. Stanislaus County is a natural _____ (prior to farming)
21. This means "devil" in Spanish
22. Fossils of this extinct aquatic lizard were discovered and unearthed locally

Across:

4. Stanislaus County was carved out of _____ County in 1854
7. In 1940, a Hollywood film about the life of this famous American frontier explorer was made (two-word answer [without a space])
8. A local avenue, mansion, and museum are all named after this family
9. Last name of 'Star Wars' director
12. Location in Stanislaus County where earth's mantle has been thrust to its surface (three-word answer [without any spaces])
14. Spanish word for "bandits" (outlaws)
15. Last name of the man who helped pass California's irrigation law in 1887
17. Some cooled volcanic lava forms this glass-like rock; its used for arrowheads
20. The type of soil found in the valley floor of Stanislaus County
23. Fictional character thought to be inspired by Estanislao, Yoscolo, and Joaquin Murrieta
24. Last name of the banker who was too "modest" for Modesto to take his name

Down Word

Bank:

Acorns
Almonds
Bracero
Diablo
Gallo
Grassland
Knights
Mission
Mosasaur
Ranchos
Three
Wheat
Yokuts

Across Word

Bank (no spaces for answers with more than one word):

Banditos
Del Puerto Canyon
Kit Carson
Loam
Lucas
McHenry
Obsidian
Ralston
Tuolumne
Wright
Zorro

My imagined Yokuts narrative (a "You Decide" Activity!) Circle ONE option from each underlined word group:

If I were a member of the Yokuts tribe long ago, I would help my family by

carving arrowheads/weaving baskets. Along with food made out of ground
(circle one)

acorns, I would most enjoy eating berries/nuts and roots/seeds. I would
(circle one) (circle one)

like to hunt for fish/frogs or lizards/snakes. To cool off in the hot summer, I
(circle one) (circle one)

would swim in the nearby San Joaquin/Stanislaus/Tuolumne River.
(find out the closest river to you and then circle it)

**Before I was born,
what were things like
for someone I know?**

**Ask a parent/guardian, grandparent,
or neighbor about some of their favorite
memories growing up in Stanislaus
County. Write it down below to share:**

The inside back cover has been intentionally left blank.



View of the train yard and the second train depot in Modesto, around 1904.

The New Don Pedro Dam near La Grange was completed in 1971. It replaced the old Don Pedro Dam, which was built in 1923. It is jointly owned and operated by Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District. The dam impounds the Tuolumne River and creates the Don Pedro Reservoir.



Almond trees blooming in Oakdale, February of 2022.

