

[Historical - California]

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April 11, 1939

Mr. Forrest E. Doucette
Visalia Times-Delta and Morning Delta
Visalia, California

Dear Mr. Doucette:

According to an account appearing in the Alta California of December 11, 1852, the town of Visalia was first surveyed in November 1852. In 1853 it became the county seat, the original center of government having been located at "Woodsville."

We enclose a typed copy of the newspaper account referred to for your information.

Very truly yours,

Mabel R. Gillis
Mabel R. Gillis
State Librarian

C:D

[Enclosure. 11 Apr 39]

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VISALIA

San Joaquin News ... Mr. Vice, the bear hunter, who is located at Visalia, on the Four Creeks, in Tulare county, furnishes the Republican with the following account of that interesting country:

On the 1st of November, Vice & O'Neil located and surveyed a new town called Visalia, in the finest section of that region. The town now contains from 60 to 80 inhabitants, 30 of whom are children who already attend school, the school-house being nearly completed when our informant left. The town is located on one of the subdivisions of the Kawceah, and is destined to be the county seat of Tulare, from the fact of its superiority in timber, soil, and the many agricultural advantages; as also from the fact that the place is more healthy, and the abundance of game and pure spring water is greater.

There are now eleven families settled in the town, who live in good hewn log houses, well picketed in, sufficient to fortify against any attack by the combined force of the Indians. The citizens feel secure from the fact that all hands are the "bone and sinew," and many of them old Indian fighters, who have their homes, their wives and their little ones around them-hosts of themselves in the hour of danger.

A saw-mill is now in course of completion, under the direction of Hunt, Goodburn & Co., and will be finished in two months. The mill will be of sufficient capacity to supply the wants of the new comers for the next season, being fifteen horse power, and two runs of saws. It is the determination of the proprietors to act in a liberal manner so as to encourage settlers, who may in the course of time be enabled to amply repay them for their present outlay. There is an abundance of white oak and other timber, superior in quality and quantity to that in any other portion of the State, surrounding the town; and the value of the land may be calculated from the fact that upwards of thirty claims of 160 acres each have been located and surveyed within four weeks after the settlement of the town; while within ten miles 100 similar claims yet remain unlocated. This land is of the finest quality, being good wheat and corn land.

It is in the hands of families of substance, among whom I would mention Mr. Packwood, and others who are now on their way from San Jose valley, well supplied with agricultural implements, seeds, &c., for the purpose of operating in the vicinity of Visalia during the coming spring. The value of located claims may be judged from the fact that the half interest of 160 acres on the town site sold for \$1,000 cash.

The Indians are docile and peaceable, and if there ever is anything to be feared from them, it will be on account of their bad treatment by government agents. The chiefs promise protection to the settlers, and have actually punished delinquents in their presence. They have also asked to be admitted on terms of intimacy with the whites, which favor has been granted, and they are now living convenient to the new town. The settlers went down to their rancherias and removed them up in wagons. This their chiefs requested, as they intended to abandon their past precarious mode of life and doubtful conduct. They are now comfortable, contented and satisfied to serve for a reasonable compensation all who may wish to use them as farm laborers.

A new road has been laid out from Visalia to Campbell's Ferry on King's river, which has many advantages over the old one, being nearer and not so marshy in wet weather, while it has the advantage during the dry season of an abundance of grass and water. This road is fourteen miles shorter than the Woodville road and thirty miles of a cut off on the Los Angeles road via Tejon Pass. Eight wagons are now on the way to this city by this road for supplies, all in good spirits. Provisions were scarce except beans, bear meat, elk, etc., which are bountifully supplied by Vice & O'Neil, for truly in this region the bear hunter is at home.

From: Daily Alta California. S.F. Dec. 11, 1852. p.1. col.6.