



# **HISTORY OF FRESNO COUNTY**

**VOLUME 1**

**PAUL E. VANDOR**

# History of Fresno County

## *Volume 1: The Early Days*

PAUL E. VANDOR

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*[admin@jazzybee-verlag.de](mailto:admin@jazzybee-verlag.de)*

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## **PREFACE**

Dear reader,

we, the publisher, have carefully reviewed and edited this book, whose original edition dates back to the year 1919. Well over a hundred hours of work have passed correcting it, but still it was not possible to eliminate all the mistakes that a 20<sup>th</sup> century scanner produced. The original scans we had at our disposal were of very poor quality. While it was possible to correct and eliminate special characters or false letters, there is unfortunately sometimes a dot where a comma should be, or a colon where a semicolon belongs, or the odd apostrophe, that a small dot in the scan generated in the text file. While we still corrected and eliminated ten thousands of errors, does not hinder the reading pleasure in any way and still makes this version of this rare book much more valuable than other versions on the market that have not been edited at all. We think it is fair to say that this is not 100% of a perfect book, but a 99% edition that has not been available since the original editions vanished from the shelves. We wish all readers a great time browsing through the history of Fresno County and the hundreds of biographies of the most important personalities.

## CHAPTER I

California is a land of never ending wonders and surprises, a land that can only be described in superlatives.

Literally and figuratively, Fresno County is to the state an empire within an empire — imperium in imperio as the Latin phrase has it. This statement is not put forth as the declaration of a newly discovered fact, but to emphasize that an old one is incontrovertible as the result of a remarkable twin development of state and county.

California, thirty-first state of the union, is about 780 miles long, has a breadth varying from 148 to 235 miles, a sea-coast line 1,200 miles long through ten degrees of latitude, a total area of 158,297 square miles of which 2,645 comprise water surface, and an estimated 101,310,080 acres, in great part rough, mountainous country, or desert. The term desert is a relative one. The land now comprised within Fresno County's area was long considered desert, fit only for pasturage and worthless for agriculture. Much of it is yet regarded in that category, lacking the water to make it productive. Imperial Valley in the county of the same name, the southeasternmost in the state located between San Diego County and the Colorado river as the state boundary line is another notable desert wonder in the agricultural line. Other instances might be quoted to emphasize the declaration that California is a land of never ending wonders and surprises.

Approximately one-half of the land surface is under federal control, including the nineteen and one-half millions or more acres in the national forests. As to area, California



is second among the states of the union. Texas alone exceeds it. It is larger than the nine combined states of New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Ohio. It is one of the richest among the states, with a startling record of material achievements and with potentialities so varied and great as to stagger the mind in the contemplation of them.

Fresno, forty-first of the counties in the order of creation, has a land area of 5,950 square miles, or 3,808,000 acres. When organized, it was much larger, but in March, 1893, a slice of 2,121 square miles was taken off from the northern part to form Madera County, and in 1909 were transferred to Kings County 120 square miles of the southeastern portion. Even with these 2,241 square miles lopped off from the original 8,214 before partition, Fresno ranks sixth of the fifty-eight counties in the state as to area. Only five exceed it, namely, Inyo, Kern, Riverside and Siskiyou, San Bernardino leading. As to population, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Alameda and Santa Clara lead it in the order named. The 1910 census returned a county population of 75,657, and for the county seat, 24,892. An estimate of 29,809 for the city was made in July, 1914, and one of 45,000 in June, 1914. The latter is according to the 1916 report of the state controller, but manifestly too liberal for various reasons. Estimates made on the figured basis of school attendance, directory publishers and chamber of commerce advertising literature all give greater returns but must be accepted with allowances. It is not to be denied that there have been large annual accessions in the rural and urban populations, but a census enumeration and not theoretical surmises will be required to give reliable figures.

The county is fourth, with Sacramento a very close fifth, for total value of assessed property. Fresno is one of the very few counties in the state that had no public

indebtedness. An estimate of the value of the county's public property is the following:

Courthouse Grounds and Jail	\$1,207,000
Hospital, Almhouse and Grounds	318,000
Fair Grounds and Buildings	100,000
Orphanage	30,000
<u>County Library Equipment</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Total	\$1,665,000

The county had no outstanding bonds and no floating indebtedness. It has \$150,000 invested in state highway bonds, \$300,000 in Liberty war bonds, \$19,490 in county school district bonds that buying speculators would not purchase because of the smallness of the issues, and in December, 1917, had \$.590,200 of accumulated funds out on two per cent call loans, a sum that fluctuates from time to time. The statistical figures of the assessor give the county an acreage of 2.251,520.

### *ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUATIONS*

Assessed value of property for 1916-17 in the state, county and city of Fresno is exhibited in the following tabulation:

#### *State*

Real Estate	\$1,851,485,421
Improvements	696,960,698
Personal Property	333,403,268
<u>Money and Credits</u>	<u>35,005,709</u>
Non Operative Roll	2,916,855,096
Operative Roll	504,284,748
<u>Railroads</u>	<u>157,006,590</u>
State Grand Total:	\$3,578,146,434

*Fresno County*

Real Estate	\$41,644,875
Improvements	11,421 ,988
Personal Property	9,892,398
<u>Money, etc.</u>	<u>110,547</u>
Total	\$63,069,808

*Fresno City*

Real Estate	\$11,596,555
Improvements	7,764,385
Personal Property	3,039,137
<u>Money, etc.</u>	<u>179,585</u>
Total	\$22,579,712
Non Operative Roll	85,649,520

<u>Operative Roll</u>	<u>13,980,567</u>
County Grand Total	\$99,630,087

The 1917-18 county assessment roll shows the following valuations for taxation purposes, not including the segregated school district valuations for one of the numerically largest county school departments in the state, exclusive of the larger populous centers of San Francisco, Los Angeles and Alameda counties.

County Real Estate  
\$56,792,585  
(Fresno City, \$15,931,470)  
Improvements  
20,075,245  
(Fresno City, \$10,933,700)  
Improvements Assessed to Others than Owners  
123,720

Personal Property  
 15,923,163  
*Money and Credits*  
 427,310  
 Non Operative Roll  
 93,342,023

Operative Roll 6,044.386

Railroads

8,515,019

Total Assessed Property  
 \$107,901,428

Fresno City as the county seat is the largest incorporated municipality. The other eight incorporated towns are; Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Kingsburg, Reedley, Sanger and Selma.

The county's apportionment by the State Board of Equalization of railroad mileage and property for state taxation is as follows:

Railroad	Mileage	Valuation
Southern Pacific	196.89	\$5,394,978
Santa Fe	96.30	2,311,200
Central Pacific	31.46	692,208
Pullman Palace	166.61	116,633

### *KEYSTONE IN ARCH OF WEALTH*

Geographically considered, California is far from being a unit. It presents with its immense sea-coast stretch and its great breadth, traversing interior wide valleys, desert wastes and high mountain ranges, geographical conditions in remarkable variety. When in their variety in turn, the land surface features, climates and productions, the latter

ranging from those of the temperate to the subtropical and the arctic zones, are further borne in mind. California may well be classified as an empire itself.

California's great interior San Joaquin Valley, an empire in itself, is the keystone in the arch of the state's wealth. The Mother Lode poured its millions of gold into the world's lap. Its plains were the public range during the cattle raising era of the boundless pasturage ground. It was once one of the world's granaries in the days of the vast grain ranch period. It is a leader today in the products of the intensive and diversified culture of the small, irrigated orchard and vineyard farm. The oil industry confined to the Coast Range is an overshadowing one, and the San Joaquin valley has become the state's oil producing region. Irrigation has transformed Fresno from a desert to an annual producer of over thirty millions.

Its potentialities are boundless almost. It is no dream that in the cultivation of rice and cotton as the latest taken up enterprises of the soil with demonstrated successes in the experimental efforts, California and its great interior valley are preparing to furnish the world with more surprises. Such an eminent authority as George C. Roeding has declared that Fresno must wake up and teach the world that "here in the central portion of the Golden State there is an empire worthy the attention of the man with the dollar." And there is a wonderful past to substantiate him.

The history of Fresno, and for that matter of the great interior valley also, was little influenced by the Spaniards or the Mexicans in so far as leaving imperishable impress upon the region that the gold seekers brought to the world's knowledge. There was no Spanish sub-stratum with the pictured life and customs as at the coastal mission establishments, so suggestive of medievalism and even feudalism, to give the quaint and picturesque setting for the American superstructure to follow and to recall the days before the Gringo came.

Of the Spanish and Mexican rule there is no lasting memorial, save perhaps in the melodious nomenclature of landmarks, and in the foreign words grafted on the English language. The name "Fresno," from the Spanish meaning "ash tree." was applied because of the abundance of the tree in the mountains of the county. It was first given to identify the river tributary to the San Joaquin and once embraced within the county, but now in Madera. It was so applied before Fresno County was organized, and even before the territory now so named had distinctive appellation as a part of Mariposa County. It was so appropriated to name the first big trees discovered by James Burney of Mariposa and John Macauley of Defiance, Ohio, in 1849. They were in Fresno territory that is now part of Madera County. Burney was of North Carolina and the first sheriff of Mariposa, elected after organization in February, 1850. The above named and two others made the find in the latter part of October on the Fresno-San Joaquin divide while pursuing animals that the Indians had stolen. This was at a time when Mariposa embraced, as one of the original twenty-seven counties of the state, nearly the entire San Joaquin Valley, south of the Tuolumne River.

## CHAPTER II

As a political entity, Fresno's history runs back to 1856. Prior to that and territorially long before that, it was unpeopled during the period that Bret Harte has so poetically described as "that bland, indolent autumn of Spanish rule, so soon to be followed by the wintry storms of Mexican independence." It was the undisputed domain of the Indian — the Digger as he was called, because he digged the ground for edible roots, bulbs and insect larvae.

It was indefinitely located as the remote and farthestmost outpost of "that section of the mining region known as the Southern Mines" after carving out from Mariposa and with it claiming Utah Territory as easternmost boundary. The Mother of Counties embraced almost everything in the easternmost interior between the Coast and Sierra ranges from Tuolumne on the north to San Luis Obispo on the south, with its celebrated central Fremont Grant concerning which alone a book might be written, its four great central gold abounding sections and quartz veins throughout the county, Mariposa as one of the original organized with formation of the state in 1850, was so rich in mining wealth that it was estimated as formed in 1856 that over 500 mills could be supplied with rock paying from sixteen dollars to twenty dollars per ton.

As to Fresno, years elapsed before "the reviving spirit of American conquest," gripped the land. With successive industrial evolutions, the transformation has been short of the marvelous. From the early primitive mining camps in canyons and gulches or along river banks, the transition

from an inland cow county has been to a vast agricultural domain, the future seat of fullest activities in that line of a great commonwealth, and the upbuilding of an interior community that every prophecy holds out as destined to become one of the largest, most populous, influential and richest. It is well on its way to reach that goal.

Jonathan Swift, the greatest satirist of his age, philosophizes through one of his characters that "he gave it as his opinion that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of philosophers put together." What then of the pioneers who on the barren nothingness of 1856 laid the basis of what is the wonderful Fresno county of 1919?

The changes that the mutations of time have wrought in the span of sixty-two years are not appreciated until they are brought to a realization by some homely yet startling illustration. The reader may measurably conceive the changes when contemplating the concrete fact that there are less than a dozen known living persons that have risen out of all obscurity in the growth of the county, or who, having removed from California, trace has been lost of them, and who were residents of the territory before and at the period of the county's organization in the year 1856.

### *ROSTER OF LIVING EARLIEST PIONEERS*

The following roster of surviving pioneers of pioneers was first compiled nearly two years ago. It has undergone five revisions to leave today in January, 1919, the submitted names, for be it borne in mind that the adult pioneer in the territory in 1856, or before county organization, must have been at twenty-one majority or close thereto, and with the sixty-two years added since, would need be, if surviving today, at an advanced age in the 80's. The living are



believed to be the following named according to best research:

Henry F. Akers, of near Sanger; William Albertus Akers, of near Coalinga; Mrs. Sarah Akers-Chambers, of San Benito; Mrs. Mary Agnes Burns, of near Sanger; Mrs. C. P. Converse that was Mrs. Stephen Caster, whose home is in Ishom Valley, Tulare County; Mrs. Lewis Leach, who was the first Mrs. C. P. Converse, and is a resident of Fresno City; Mrs. Mary McKenzie-Hoxie, born at Millerton in 1855; Hiram McDonald, who was chief of police of 5-Point Precinct, Phoenix, Ariz., at last accounts. The last two were in the county as juveniles at organization date.

### *Jasper N. Musick*

Jasper N. Musick headed the above list for more than a year and a half as perhaps the widest known of the early pioneers, though the Akers family preceded him in the territory by some three years. Death removed Musick at the age of eighty-five years on June 4, 1918, and two days later his remains were laid away in the little rural cemetery at Academy, where sleepeth so many of the pioneer men and women of the county.

Familiarly known as "Uncle Jess" because of his lovable character, Jasper N. Musick had experienced all the vicissitudes of early day pioneering, and as a boy the family located at what is now Jefferson City, Mo., at a period when St. Louis was on the map as a trading post. He was the sixth of fifteen children. A brother, Jeremiah, for whom a Fresno residence addition was named (he died in 1904) came to California after the war and engaged in stock raising.

Jasper and a brother crossed the plains, arriving in the fall of 1850. They made the journey to Salt Lake City with ox teams, but traded for horses as a swifter means of progress. Arriving at Hangtown (Placerville, Cal.), they

were surprised to behold the traded off oxen that had previously arrived and in a much better condition than the horses. For six years, Musick mined in Amador County with reasonable success, in 1856 settled in Mariposa County, engaged incidentally in Indian warfare and participated in the skirmish on Tule River which quelled the outbreak. Settling at Millerton, he teamed to and from Stockton and the mines, hauling provisions to the latter for five cents a pound with ten days required on the round trip. In 1858 he moved the Fort Miller soldiers to Benicia Barracks on evacuation.

Later he located on Dry Creek in the stock business with J. G. Simpson, conducting a Millerton meat shop, and each spring drove a band of cattle to Sonora and other mining centers at profit. This partnership continued until 1865, when he took up the sheep business with ranch at Letcher. There he also pioneered in orange and deciduous fruit growing. His residence in Fresno city dated from 1892, and here in comparative affluence he lived a retired life after the whirl and excitement of his younger years. By a first marriage at Dry Creek with a native born of Millerton. Rebecca, daughter of James Richards, a pioneer settler, five children were born, three of whom attained majority. The second marriage in December, 1878, was at Lemoore to Nancy J. Messersmith, whose family came from Cole County, Mo., after the war.

Mr. Musick was for two terms a county supervisor and chairman of the board for a time. It was during his incumbency that the county-seat removal was effected, a change that he had championed. While a Dry Creeker, he was in 1872 one of the incorporators and organizers and the treasurer of the Dry Creek Academy with ex-Sheriff J. D. Collins as the first teacher, a school of acknowledged repute. Later, building and grounds were deeded to the school district of which Mr. Musick was a trustee for years, and school has never closed doors to its original purpose.

In his younger days Mr. Musick was a leader of the Democracy.

As an evidence of the remarkable faculty that some men are endowed with in the recollection of dates, is cited the incident that on the day of the funeral, June 6, 1918. John C. Hoxie, the late pioneer, recalled on his way to the obsequies to attend them as a pall bearer, that the day of his friend's death lacked only forty-eight hours of the day. June 2, 1856, of his first meeting, as a small boy with Jasper N. Musick at old Millerton. Two days after the funeral was also the incident of the recording of a government land patent to Musick under date of August 30, 1877, and apparently long forgotten.

### *Joseph Burns*

At the age of eighty-eight years and three months on December 13, 1918, Joseph Burns died after an illness of five months at his home near Sanger. He was one of the last of the Old Guard, his coming antedating county organization in 1856. He had followed agricultural and pastoral pursuits nearly all his life in California, amassing a competency which permitted him to aid in the development of the county in humble fashion. He was a good citizen, never in public life, never sought political preferment but remained content to follow the unobtrusive career of a farmer, drifting along with the time and the tide, his circumstances benefitted by the natural advancement and enrichment of the region in which he had chosen to cast his lot, undisturbed by the hurly-burly of changing epochs and living more in the historic dead past than the bustling, restless present.

Joseph Burns was a South Carolinian born, but as an infant removed with parents to Sparta, Randolph county, Ill.. In early manhood and allured by the gold excitement, he came to California in 1852; according to another report in 1854. At any rate he settled in Mariposa county and was

a resident of that county even after Fresno was carved out of that vast mining domain. There is little to be told of his early experiences, though after removal to Fresno after county organization it is recalled that like many others he was adopted according to a prevailing practice of the times into tribal relations through the daughter of an Indian chief with a place in history. Cowchiti, as he was known, had to do with the preliminaries of the treaty of peace signed up at Fort Barbour, April 29, 1851, with the rebellious tribes of the valley following surrender to the Mariposa Battalion under Maj. James D. Savage and with the last act in the drama — the bringing in of captives and starved out Yosemitees from the fastnesses of the valley. Chief Cowchiti was the scout and interpreter that guided Capt. Boling's company to and from the valley in the pursuit, being the first visit by white men in number to enter and explore the scenic gorge and make its fame known. Cowchiti was looked upon by the soldiery not altogether without suspicion and doubt as to his motives and purposes, but proved faithful to his trust.

Burns settled on Willow creek, a tributary of Coarse Gold Creek, in Madera county now, setting out there what is said to have been the first peach orchard in this region. In 1862 he married Mary Agnes Lewis, whose father was an herb doctor at a time when graduate practitioners were few. In the year 1869, Burns pulled up stakes and moved to Centerville in the Kings river district and engaged in stock and sheep raising and farming, and also planted one of the first orange groves in that pioneer citrus belt. He and others were associated in the co-operative Sweem ditch enterprise. It was on any scale the first practical irrigation demonstration in the county and with its inclusion in the Church irrigation plan metamorphosed the parched grazing land of the plains into vineyards, orchards and farms.

The published Burns obituary recorded several glaring inaccuracies. The death was heralded as that of the oldest

citizen and pioneer. This was manifestly incorrect. It was declared as "an outstanding circumstance" of his reported marriage in 1862 "that it was the first recorded in the new county of Fresno which up to that time formed a part of Mariposa County." This is obviously also an absurd statement. Equally far from the truth was the statement that "for several years he was the only Republican who cast his vote in Millerton, then the county seat of Fresno County." The distinction of having been the historical "Lone Republican" in the county has been fastened on various persons, now dead, among them the late Judge Charles A. Hart and the late Supervisor H. C. Daulton. Truth is that the subject of the obituary never did vote at Millerton because there were precinct polling places at Coarse Gold and at Centerville even before the Republican party came into existence. If there is a well authenticated historical incident it is the one that the "Lone Republican" of Fresno that gained a state wide name because casting the only Republican vote in his locality for that new party's first presidential nominee was "Dad" Aldrich, or Aldridge (the spelling is varied). He gained that publicity because of his vote for Abraham Lincoln at the election November 6, 1860, at the Coarse Gold precinct. The late Capt. R. P. Mace of Madera was the presiding officer at the polling place, and the late James G. McCardle and William Cunningham (brother-in-law of Mace by the latter's second marriage), escorted and protected Aldrich to the ballot box to vote, the three cognizant of the threats made by certain roughs against Aldrich that "no damned Abolitionist would vote if they could prevent it."

Burns was undoubtedly one of the earliest voting Republicans in the county as he was also one of the 100 who subscribed for small stock holdings to start the Fresno Republican newspaper under the late Dr. Chester Rowell. It is not to say that in the activities of his day and time he did not aid and encourage the movements for the development

of the county, for he did do so. It is however to record history that he chose to drift with the times and while encouraging these movements did not initiate any. He was not ambitious on these lines. He did not yearn to flash in the lime light of publicity. He had a competency and was content to let well enough alone. His competency dwindled with time but to the end he pursued a life of restful peace and quiet.

A widow, two sons and four daughters survive him. A member of the Presbyterian church from childhood, he was not bound by sectarianism in religious matters. Report had it that he took comfort before death from the 23rd Psalm and at the last recited it to the end:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
"All the days of my life;  
"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
"Forever."

### *Joseph M. Kinsman*

During the year, 1916, Joseph M. Kinsman of Madera, a pioneer of 1848, headed the list. He and his brother, Albert, known as "Al," were of the clan of squaw-men so numerous in the days when a white woman in the mining regions was a rarity. Joseph was the surviving brother and he died December 26, 1916. The story is told that a fad of later days was his collection of newspapers and prints with storied experiences of the pioneer times. He was himself a fountain of information and had a remarkable memory of what he had in his unclassified collection. It is said that he wantonly set fire to his shack and destroyed the collection that would have been a priceless treasure for the historian. Neither brother filled a place in public or historic life.

Joseph Kinsman died at his Northfork miner's cabin at the age of eighty-nine years and ten months. He was a sailor in

youth, born in Boston in 1826, came to California in 1849 and mined on the Chowchilla, later went into business at Merced Falls, Mariposa County, and in 1875 settled at Hooker's Cove at Northfork and continued there until death. It was said of him that he was a life-long Democrat and a Southern sympathizer in the Civil War, although a Northerner born, and was known as "the Connecticut Rebel." It is recalled of him that he kept a diary of daily events from 1849 to 1875 when it was destroyed by fire, and then that he opened another.

*Capt. R. P. Mace and Wife*

A notable death preceding that of Kinsman's, was that of Mrs. Jennie E. Mace, pioneer of 1855-56 and widow of Capt. R. P. Mace (April 24, 1894). She died July 17, 1916; he was a California '49er. Death, in the home of over forty years of residence, removed in Mrs. Mace the oldest pioneer woman of Madera County. Her first California home was at O'Neal's, and during her sixty-one years in the valley, she saw Fresno, Merced, Mono and Madera Counties come into existence and the cities of Fresno and Madera spring out of the plains. She was a native of Ireland, born in August, 1837, and with her father, Andrew Cunningham, and her mother, came to Indiana when only a few weeks of age. She married in 1855, John Gilmore, and the honeymoon was passed on the journey to California. She settled at O'Neal's, where she lived nineteen years and where a daughter (Mrs. Tillie Gilmore-Brown) and two sons were born. Her marriage to Capt. Mace occurred in 1866. She was a much beloved woman, who was noted for many acts of charity and benevolence, was prominent in the Methodist Church, South, and in 1869 was one with others, to organize at Fort Miller, one of the first Sunday schools in the valley, the abandoned guardhouse being the place of meeting. In possession of her faculties to the last, she could

talk interestingly of experiences from the viewpoint of the good wife, the respected woman and the honored mother of two families.

Capt. Mace's adventurous career started with a sea voyage as a cabin boy from Boston to New Orleans, thereafter with a companion he spent a roving season with a French trader among the Comanches. At Independence, Mo., he joined the trading train of the American Fur Trading Company en route to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas. He accompanied Robert Isher, noted scout, trapper and trainer of Kit Carson, on the volunteer journey to Taos, to convey important messages for 180 miles to Charles Bent, one of the four brothers, trailing through the hostile region of the Utes. The journeying was done by night with concealment in canyons by daylight. The return to the fort was with escort of trappers and hunters. Mace continued in the employ of Charles Bent for six years as a trusty scout, carrying express from Bent's Fort to Fort George on another dangerous trail and taking his life in hand on every journey and on one occasion holding five Indians at bay.

For two years with Kit Carson he hunted the buffalo for meat for the 400 employees of the fur company, chasing the bison over the present site of Denver, Colo., and also being at Pueblo, that state, when the first adobe was raised for a trading post. At twenty-three he returned to New Orleans, continued for three years as clerk in a wine house and at the outbreak of the war with Mexico was among the first to volunteer and for three months served under Gen. E. P. Gaines. Louisiana being requisitioned upon for a regiment. Mace returned to New Orleans on leave, recruited the first company for that first regiment, was appointed captain — hence the title that remained with him through life — was the senior in rank and served until the treaty of peace. He also served in quelling an Indian uprising in Yucatan. The gold discovery attracted him to California and the year 1849 saw him in San Francisco (Yerba Buena) camped in



Happy Valley, south of Market street, afterward the manufacturing and foundry district, headed soon for Rose's Bar on the Yuba and with varying success mining for twenty years. Later at Millerton, he and a company spent three years building a race to turn the San Joaquin River for mining. They first struck it rich, making from a few buckets of dirt, \$900 and \$1,000 a day for several days, but the bed soon played out. He had also a quartz lead at Fine Gold Gulch. This was mismanaged and destroyed in his absence. The later No-Fence law practically ruined him so he killed his live stock to dispose of it. He rented and managed the hotel at the ambitious settlement at Borden which once aspired to be the county seat of Fresno County, continuing from 1874 until 1876, when Madera was founded and he was one of the first to buy town lots. Madera eventually crowded Borden off the map. In 1877 he built the Yosemite Hotel in Madera, stopping place for Yosemite Valley travel via Raymond, and when it was destroyed by fire he erected the standing brick structure that faces the railroad depot. Capt. Mace was justice of the peace for years and served for three terms in the state legislature.

Running allusion is made to his career to emphasize the spirit and character of the men who were the prominent pioneers of Fresno. They were men that did things. It was not the period for mollicoddles.

Thomas Sprecherman, also known as "Tom Jones," who came on the Chowchilla as a miner in 1849, and John Besore, of French descent and an early pioneer, have been on the list. They and Thomas J. Dunlap, popularly known as Jeff Dunlap, all Fresnans, became Maderans after county division because they lived north of the San Joaquin River line.

### *The Akers Family*

The Akers family group is a notable one of five brothers with many descendants. They came overland to the territory in 1853 via the southern route, heading straight for Millerton and settling on the Kings River at Centerville or Scottsburg as the first settlement was named. They were in the order of primogeniture; Harvey (died June 17, 1911), at the age of eighty-three. Smith and Anderson (both long since passed away) and the surviving two youngest, Henry F. and William Albertus. A sister is another survivor, a resident of Bitterwater in San Benito County.

The Akers made up an ox-team party of emigrants and it is related that when near where Tulare City is now located they found themselves almost out of provisions and facing starvation. Ahead of them trailed another party fairly well supplied with stock cattle. It bogged in crossing the Kings River, and what was its loss and misfortune proved the salvation of the others, for the Akers party rescued the mud imbedded cattle out of the river bottom and slaughtering them for beef was enabled to close in on the last lap of the long journey and to furnish itself with meat after arrival at destination.

### *James N. Walker*

Another who was once listed was a pioneer of the valley, influential in his day politically and financially, James Null Walker, who died January, 1916. His closing career is tinged pitifully when he is recalled in the days of the dandified and handsome personage of younger and middle age, in contrast with his Rip Van Winkle sloven, ragged and neglected appearance of the closing days. A day had been when none was too high not to court the friendship and acquaintance of the Hon. James N. Walker. A Missourian, born in February, 1829, he was brought up in the handling of stock and at fifteen was sent to the New Orleans market in charge of his father's cattle, and later was taken into

partnership. He made his last trip to New Orleans as a drover in 1849 and netted enough out of the joint venture to purchase an outfit to come to California in 1850 and arrived in August, after the overland ox-team journey.

He mined in Grass Valley, Nevada County, and in Mariposa County following up mining with merchandising at Coarse Gold Gulch in Fresno County. He conducted a large credit business with the miners but had to close out at a heavy loss with the early giving-out of the mines. Walker's Store was a political and civic center in those days. Ranching at Fine Gold followed, and in the foothills, in 1863, he stocked a range with four dollar a head cattle and in 1867 located also on the north side of the San Joaquin. This was an establishment that was a show place in its day, it was added to until he had 1,300 acres on the river, first raising mules, then interested for twelve years in sheep and later in cattle. Prosperity favored him in this and other enterprises and he served two terms in the state legislature after 1861, was twice sheriff after 1866 and an assemblyman in 1870.

It was said of him in 1905, that he was then one of five left of the early settlers of Fresno County, manifestly as incorrect a statement as the popularly misconceived one that he was the first sheriff of the county. Still, Walker was a prominent and honored citizen in his day. There is in existence a remarkable photographic work of art by Frank Beck picturing him tuning up an old fiddle. The picture was one of twelve that won for Beck the first prize at the photographers' national convention exhibition at Chautauqua. Walker died at the age of eighty-six leaving a \$40,000 estate, a widow, Agnes J. Cranmer, and seven children, four of them daughters.

*Joseph Medley and T. J. Dunlap*

Death removed from the list, in the summer of 1917, Joseph Medley and T. J. Dunlap. Medley, born in October, 1826, was a picturesque character, a resident of the Auberry Valley section for upwards of sixty-six years, identified with activities in the Tollhouse lumber district, a miner of course in the first days, and a squaw-man as was his brother, Marion, whose death preceded his. Joseph went through life without achieving other mark of distinction than as the picturesque survivor of a past day, eking out an existence as a cattle and hog rancher, and removed only a degree above the Indian whose life long associate he had been. His remains lie buried in the little cemetery at Auberry Grove and, at the simple funeral (July 9, 1917) Rev. Hardie Connor of the near-by Indian Mission officiated. Surviving Medley were son and daughter, three nephews and a niece. Leaving no impress of his long life on the history of the county, yet talking interestingly of the very earliest personal recollections of it and its men, the most lurid events in his negative career are recalled in visits to the later founded Fresno City in its infant days to yield to the pitfalls in his path in the den that was dignified with the name of the Star Theater to squander with the prodigality of a Monte Cristo the returns of successive seasons from sale of hogs and cattle, returning to foothill haunts and squaw, bankrupt after wasting his substance on the bedizened and short skirted damsels who welcomed him as long as his money lasted. Medley ended his days in the almshouse, decrepit and almost blind. The local print noticed his death in a twenty-five-line obituary, without revealing the picturesque identity of the character that had passed away.

Of another stamp was T. J. Dunlap of Madera, arrival of 1852-53, whom fortune favored at the very outset in making him strike it rich with a cousin in mining at the mouth of Kaiser Creek where it empties into the San Joaquin, later selling the claim for a big price after having

profitably worked it for years. His later day home was on the ranch near Fine Gold; in the 70's he was in the lumber business with saw mill on the site of what is now Bass Lake in Madera County, one of the impounded water reservoirs for electric power generation and at the upper end of which is located The Pines resort.

Dunlap represented in the Fresno County board of supervisors the district north of the San Joaquin, made a campaign for sheriff, but was defeated, and was a deputy under County Assessor W. J. Hutchinson. He was a citizen of note and his death was at the age of eighty-nine. As with many others Fortune, fickle drab that she is, gave him cold shoulder in his last days; or perhaps times and conditions had changed and the pioneer of other days fell by the wayside in the swifter march of the day.

Passing allusion is made here only to earliest of pioneers in Mrs. Ann McKenzie-Hart who died in 1910, at the age of eighty-five and Dr. Lewis Leach who passed away at seventy-four, in March, 1897. Record of them is found elsewhere. They were of the very first white permanent settlers. Others might be recalled but they would have to be summoned out of obscurity. It is with sadness that it must be noted that in their closing days fate has been unkind, even harsh, with some of these pioneers of pioneers, for burdened with the ills and infirmities of age and poverty not a few have had to seek the sheltering roof of public institutions.

### *John Dwyer and Robert Brantsford*

Not overlooked should be one who, until his death in June, 1912, was a character in Fresno city. John Dwyer came to the territory with the soldiers to give protection to the miners against the hostile Indians. He came as a drummer boy and the tale is, that on the march through Death Valley he was carried, in an exhausted state, for two

days and nights on the shoulders of Robert Brantsford, a stalwart and burly Virginian and soldier of the expedition. Dwyer labored on the hand-operated saw mill that turned out the logs and planks for Fort Miller, the soldiers first bivouacking at Fort Washington, further down on the river, where today the school district bearing the name is located.

Dwyer was also of the squaw-men contingent. After leaving the garrison he became a freight carrier between Stockton and the Southern Mines; in this connection the story is recalled that as an expert horseman he was once a principal at Stockton, in a wager with thousands in gold dust at stake, as to who had the best horse to move a load of given weight over a marked course. The demonstration by his opponent foreshadowed his loss of the wager, but a quick thought saved the day. Dwyer jumped on his horse astraddle and with the added weight the animal was enabled to secure better foothold to start moving the load and the wager was won. Dwyer was known in Fresno as "The sand wagon man" from his vocation of carting and selling sand for mortar, plaster and other construction work.

Dwyer had passed his eighty-fourth year when death summoned him. It is to be noted as remarkable, the years that the men and women of the pioneer times attained after the hardships and privations endured. Dwyer as a teamster hauled the material in the construction of the Millerton courthouse, was a California volunteer in the Civil War, took unto wife the widow, Mary Friedman of Millerton, was a pioneer of Fresno city, and a member of the first volunteer fire company. His lot in life was a humble one but he shirked no duty.

Of Brantsford who also joined the squaw-men, it is recorded that he died in September, 1890, and in his will, made liberal provision for a daughter Martha, the offspring of a Mono Indian mother, who was known as Mary Hancock because of having assumed other marital relations.