



Notes: *The Thirsty Land* by Benjamin F. Rhodes (1943)

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Benjamin F. Rhodes, 1943. "The Thirsty Land." Ph.D. dissn., UCB.

Notes by M.G., from microfiche

pp.59-60 1887, Modesto I.D. formed by vote of 700 to 156. Of the 156, 150 owned 70,000/108,000 acres in I.D. They grew wheat.

p.108 1901-02, after "dismal 90s," construction revived on water works. Land sales perked up. 1903, water first arrives.

p.115 Alfalfa first replaced wheat. (Looks as though first irrigators just irrigated wheat!?) Alf gave quicker return than trees and vines.

p.122 Later, vines and groves came on, after alfalfa.

pp.119-20 Rural settlement proceeds fast. Ca. 10%/yr. (This seems to apply to 1903-07.) Land divided into small farms.

City of Modesto pop. rise followed county, with a lag.

p.124 1908-09, irrigated acres in M.I.D. rose 20%/yr.

p.127 1904-10, acres in wheat fell fast.

p.128 No. of farms in Stan Cty. and Calif.

Date	Number	of	farms	-----	Pop-	ula-	tion
	Stan. Cnty	% rise	Calif.	% rise	Stan. Cnty	Calif	Modesto City
1900	951	--	n.a.	--			2024
1910	2687	183	73k	--			4034
1920	4556	70	118k	62			9241

Thus, no. of farms in Stanislaus County nearly quintupled, 1900-20. Likewise, the pop. of the City of Modesto. (No. of farms in Calif. also rose fast, 1910-20, as irrigation districts spread like wildfire. This trend continued up to 1930, but Rhodes' data stop with 1920. California trends bucked national trends, for nationwide the no. of farms was falling, and their ave. acreage was rising.)

p.56 "Wheat ... is an industry freed from detail ... It has none of the petty incidents ... where each month has its duties. ... The cutting, thrashing (sic) and sacking of grain at a single operation is spectacular as well as effective. ... In cowboy land the irrigation ditch has always been regarded with disfavor because it is the badge and symbol of a despised occupation. The same feeling ... has prevailed in the wheat-growing districts of California, and for much the same reason."

----- Elwood Mead, Report of Irrigation Investigations in California, Bulletin No. 100, p.32.

(Cf. psych. profile of Magnus Derrick, a character in The Octopus by Frank Norris, ca. 1903.)