

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MONTEREY COUNTY

MONTEREY is bounded on the South by the Pacific Ocean, and San Luis Obispo County; on the East by the counties of San Benito and Fresno; on the North by San Benito and Santa Cruz; and on the West by Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Its length is nearly 120 miles by an average width of 42 miles.

It possesses nearly a million acres of rich agricultural land, almost unparalleled for productiveness. Until recently the greater portion of the County has been devoted to the raising of cattle and sheep; and much of the best land is still held by the original grantees, their assigns, or immediate descendants.

There is a large Mexican and native Californian population in the country. Within the past few years many of the large ranchos have been purchased by Americans, and by them subdivided into farms. As these changes occur, the fertile portions of the County will be utilized to the fullest extent rendered possible by careful cultivation, and the greatest imaginable benefit will accrue to the community at large. The Santa Lucia Mountains extend from Carmel Bay, in an unbroken line, South-east, bordering the Coast as far as San Luis Obispo, then tending toward the East, are merged into the main Monte Diablo Range. They are a rugged and unexplored mass, over 5,000 feet in elevation at the highest point. The Western portion of the range is particularly abrupt, and inaccessible. The average breadth of the Santa Lucia Range is 18 miles. The magnificent valley of the Salinas River is enclosed between the Santa Lucia and Gavilan Ranges. It extends Southward from Monterey Bay, nearly one hundred miles. The Gavilan Range separates the County of Monterey from that of San Benito; the latter having been taken from the former in March, 1874.

The Salinas River, after flowing through San Luis Obispo County, enters Monterey a few miles south of the old mission of San Miguel, nearly in the centre of the southern border of the County. This river is the only one in the whole Coast Range, connecting with the ocean, which is navigable.

The wharves at the mouth of the river are substantially built, and are kept in good repair. The dimensions of the river increase so much during the winter season as to render the building of expensive wharves a matter attended with considerable risk. Its usual width at the entrance to the bay is about four hundred and fifty feet. In the wet season, it has been known to exceed a mile.

The Carmel is an inconsiderable stream, which drains the hilly country North and East of the northern termination of the Santa Lucia Mountains. Its outlet is Carmel Bay. These are the only rivers of importance in the County.

Besides the valley already mentioned, viz: the Salinas, are the Pajaro, the Carmel, and the San Antonio, the two latter, both sites of old missions, are famous for their fruits. Figs, grapes, olives and peaches can be cultivated here, as well as cereals.

The Salinas Valley contains in the vicinity of 1,000 square miles. It is used mostly for agricultural purposes, being nearly all under cultivation. Some years since, this County contained more sheep than any other in the State. They are not as numerous at present, but more valuable, the breeds having been greatly improved.

There is, probably, no county in the State as well adapted to this industry as Monterey. The increase is from 90 to 110 per centum, and no disease has ever afflicted the herds. The hills in the Coast Range, too, afford pasturage in seasons when the lowlands are suffering from drouth.

Pajaro Valley extends from the shore of Monterey Bay to the foot of the Gavilan Mountains, a distance of about ten miles, ranging from six to eight miles in width.

This land is exceedingly fertile and almost level; on either side of it for several miles is a