



150 YEARS OF WATER:

**THE HISTORY OF THE
SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT**



Prepared by the Water Education Foundation

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By Gary Pitzer

Prepared by the Water Education Foundation



CREDITS

This book was developed and published by the Water Education Foundation in conjunction with the San Juan Water District. The book tells the history of the district from its founding as a water provider to the 1800s gold miners to its 150th anniversary in 2004. Grant funding for this project was provided by the San Juan Water District.

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DEDICATION

For those familiar with the water industry – particularly in Northern California – the name Jim English is synonymous with integrity and vision.

Jim English came to San Juan Water District in 1975. At the time, the district vehicle didn't have a door, the forklift only maneuvered in reverse, and district staff had to drive a backhoe around the facilities due to a lack of vehicles. The district was in total disrepair, but high in spirit.

When Jim left in 2003 after serving as the district's general manager for 14 years, the spirit remained, but the rest of San Juan was completely transformed.

Jim helped the district become an industry leader in supplying high-quality water, managing the transformation of San Juan's open ditches and



"I've been in the water business for 40 years. I've had one wife, two jobs and three homes. Loyalty – that's what I'm all about." – Jim English

reservoirs into a state-of-the-art water treatment plant and distribution system. He shifted the district's priority to the customer, ensuring that each staff member was committed to excellent customer service. Being a visionary, he also positioned the district as a regional leader, collaborating with a number of water agencies and organizations throughout California to reach

the mutual objective of providing people with their most vital resource – water.

San Juan Water District owes many of its achievements over the last 28 years to Jim English's leadership and commitment. It's only fitting that a book commemorating the district's history would be dedicated to such a man.

Thank you, Jim.

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CHAPTER ONE



Gold Becomes Liquid Gold

There was gold in the hills, and the miners in the first years of the California Gold Rush couldn't get after it fast enough. In the years following the discovery, intrepid prospectors continued to pan the gravelly bottom of the American River for the precious yellow flakes, but those interested in a bigger payday quickly moved to the flat benchlands above the river to pry their reward from the soil. Separating gold from the earth required water, and it was that need which created the origins of an enterprise that would become the San Juan Water District.

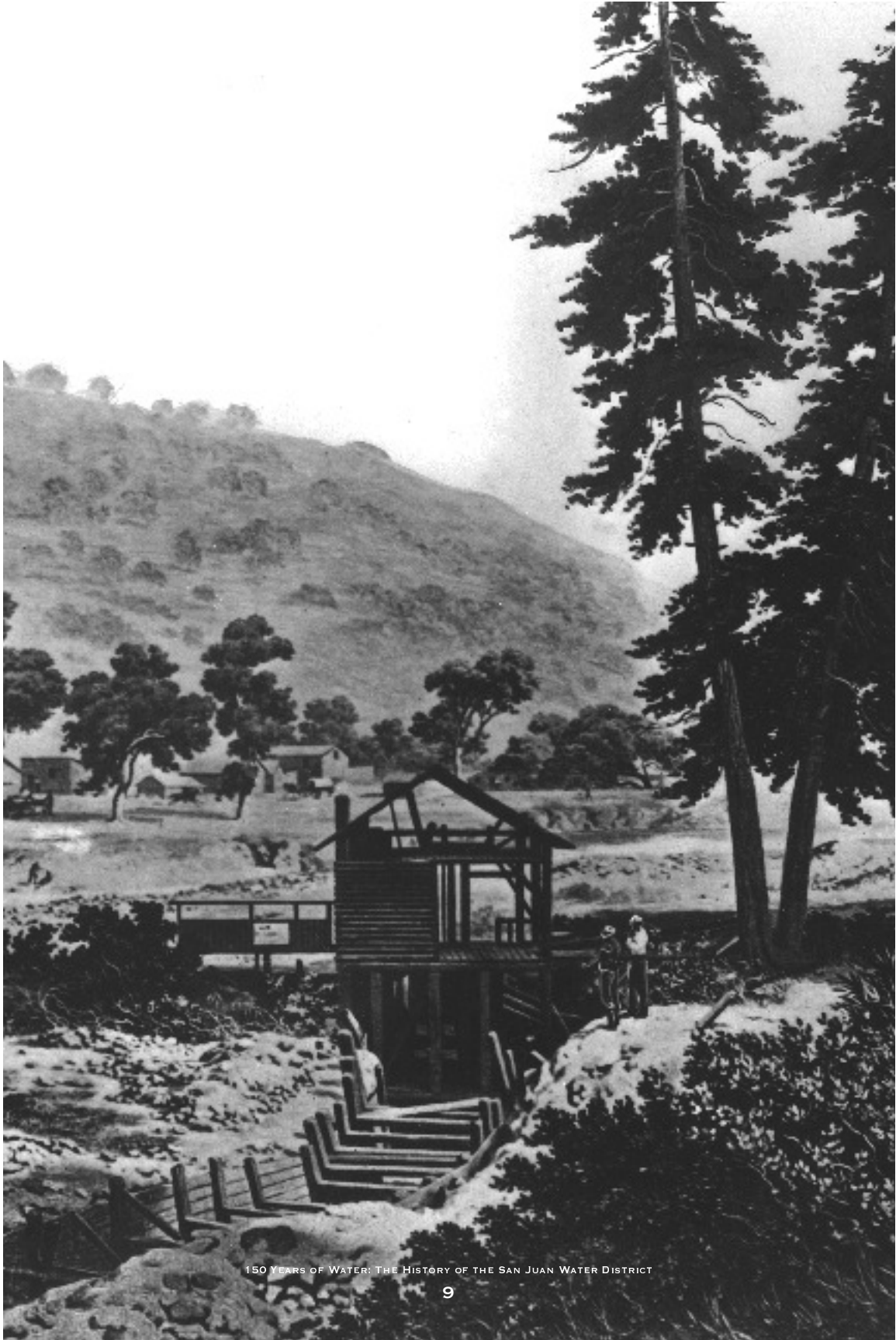
THE EARLY YEARS

The story, as most Californians know, began in January 1848 when master carpenter James Marshall spotted some gleaming reflections in the cold river water at John Sutter's sawmill at Coloma. Despite Sutter's attempt to keep news of the discovery quiet, it was not long before the entire world knew that the foothills of the Sierra Nevada offered the promise of instant riches. Not long after Marshall's discovery, gold was found on the American River's north fork. In 1853, survey parties went upstream to find a location where a diversion canal could be built to bring water to mining sites along the north fork. "Each day more fully proves the richness and extent of the diggings in that vicinity – the only cry is for more water," wrote the *Placer Herald* on March 5, 1853.

In late spring of 1854, the Natoma Water and Mining Company, which had built canal systems on the south fork of the river, called a meeting of its stockholders to discuss and vote on the formation of a similar company to serve miners on the north fork. Less gold was being panned from the riverbed, and water was needed for off-stream mining

SUTTER'S MILL, COLOMA, CALIFORNIA





operations year-round. Some forward-looking thinkers saw the construction of a canal as a good idea because of the eventual need for agricultural irrigation in the fertile soil in northeast Sacramento County.

On July 27, 1854, at the bustling mining community of Mormon Island, where the north and south forks of the river converged, the North Fork American River and Mining

On July 27, 1854, at the bustling mining community of Mormon Island, where the north and south forks of the river converged, the North Fork American River and Mining Company was formed. A few days later the president and company trustees met again and changed the name to the American River Water and Mining Company, the predecessor of today's San Juan Water District.

Company was formed. A few days later the president and company trustees met again and changed the name to the American River Water and Mining Company, the predecessor of today's San Juan Water District. A contract was completed with laborers to dam the river about two miles east of Auburn and divert it

in a southern direction to what is today the city of Folsom. On September 18,





1854, workers began the process of building the canal that would bring water to the burgeoning mining camps. It took nearly three months to reach Rattlesnake Bar, a distance of eight miles.

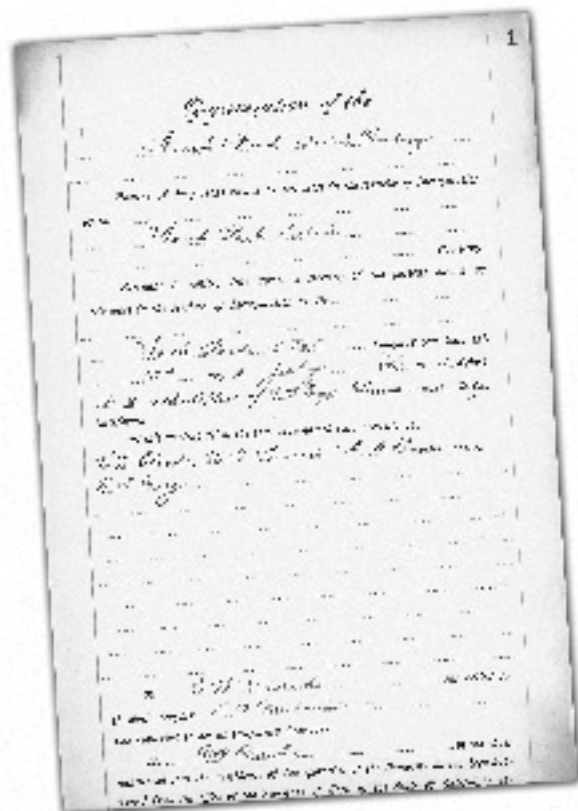
The American River Water and Mining Company incorporated on November 27, 1854, at which time the claim was made for 3,000 miner's inches, or about nine gallons of water per minute, from the river. The incorporation papers stated that the water was to be used for mining, agricultural, mechanical and other purposes.

By New Year's Day, 1856, the canal reached some 33 miles to Mississippi Bar, just above Fair Oaks. The *Alta Californian* newspaper noted the progress of the endeavor on May 11, 1855:

“The enterprising proprietors of the North Fork Canal have extended it from Tamaroo Bar, on the north fork of the American River, in the County of Placer, to Mississippi Bar, in Sacramento County. The distance is 33 miles.

Their large reservoir above Mississippi Bar is completed, and the water in it covers about 40 acres. This canal passes some 40 distinct mining districts, some of them of the richest character, and which could not be developed without the aid of the water furnished by this North Fork Enterprise.”

The “big ditch” could not have been built had it not been for the large labor



pool of workers, many of whom had abandoned full-time mining for the promise of steady pay and the chance that they just might find a “trace of color” as they carved the canal through the foothills. Today’s engineers marvel at the prowess of their predecessors. Somehow, they overcame steep canyon walls, backbreaking labor and landslides that would wipe out weeks of progress.

In some places, they had to route the canal hundreds of feet around a ravine while only gaining a few feet. The main canal was five feet wide at the bottom, eight feet wide at the surface and three feet deep.

THE WORLD RUSHES IN

Work on the canal coincided with a population explosion the likes of



55,1865!
FOR THE GOLD MINES!
THROUGH
US LADING
GIVEN BY THE

which will never be seen again in California. Once word of the gold discovery reached the eastern United States, men literally dropped what they were doing to go west and seek their fortune. The worldwide rush to the goldfields began in early 1849 via three routes: the Isthmus of Panama, around the treacherous Cape Horn and

across the overland trail. The journey from New York to California varied from weeks to months and was fraught

SACRAMENTO IN 1850



with peril. But the flow of fortune-seekers was unstoppable and quickly transformed the bucolic landscape of the Sierra foothills and beyond. San Francisco, the gateway to the gold fields, saw its population swell from 600 in 1848 to 25,000 in 1849. A recent arrival from New York described the scene in September 1849:

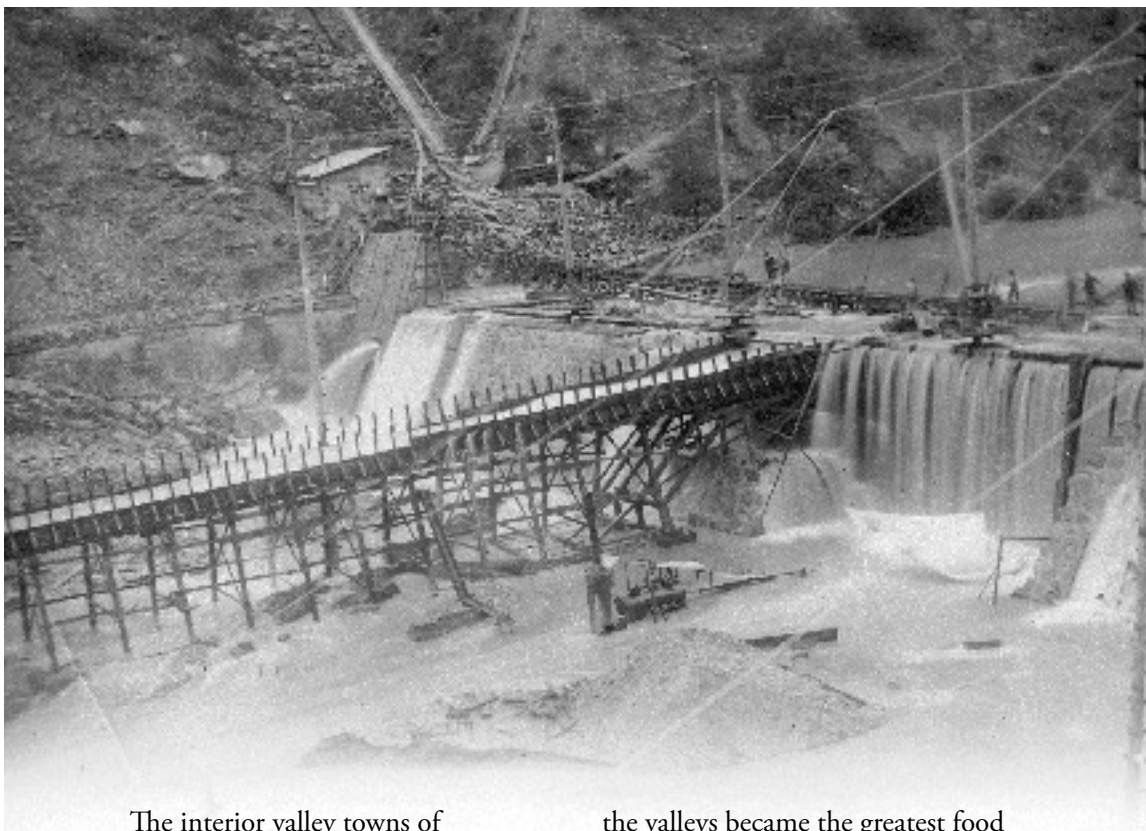
“Hundreds of tents and houses . . . scattered all over the heights, and along the shore for over a mile. A furious wind was blowing through a gap in the hills, filling the streets with clouds

The interior valley towns of Sacramento and Stockton also grew dramatically as prospectors passed through. Just prior to and following its admission to the Union, California's population grew from 18,000 at the time of the gold discovery to 165,000 in less than three years.

of dust. On every side stood buildings of all kinds, begun or half-finished, and the greater part of them mere canvas sheds, open in front and covered with all kinds of signs in all languages. Great quantities of goods

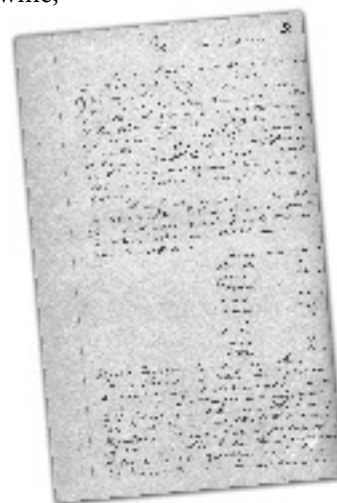
were piled in the open air, for want of a place to store them. The streets were full of people, hurrying to and fro, and of diverse and bizarre a character as the houses . . . One knows not whether he is awake or in some wonderful dream.”

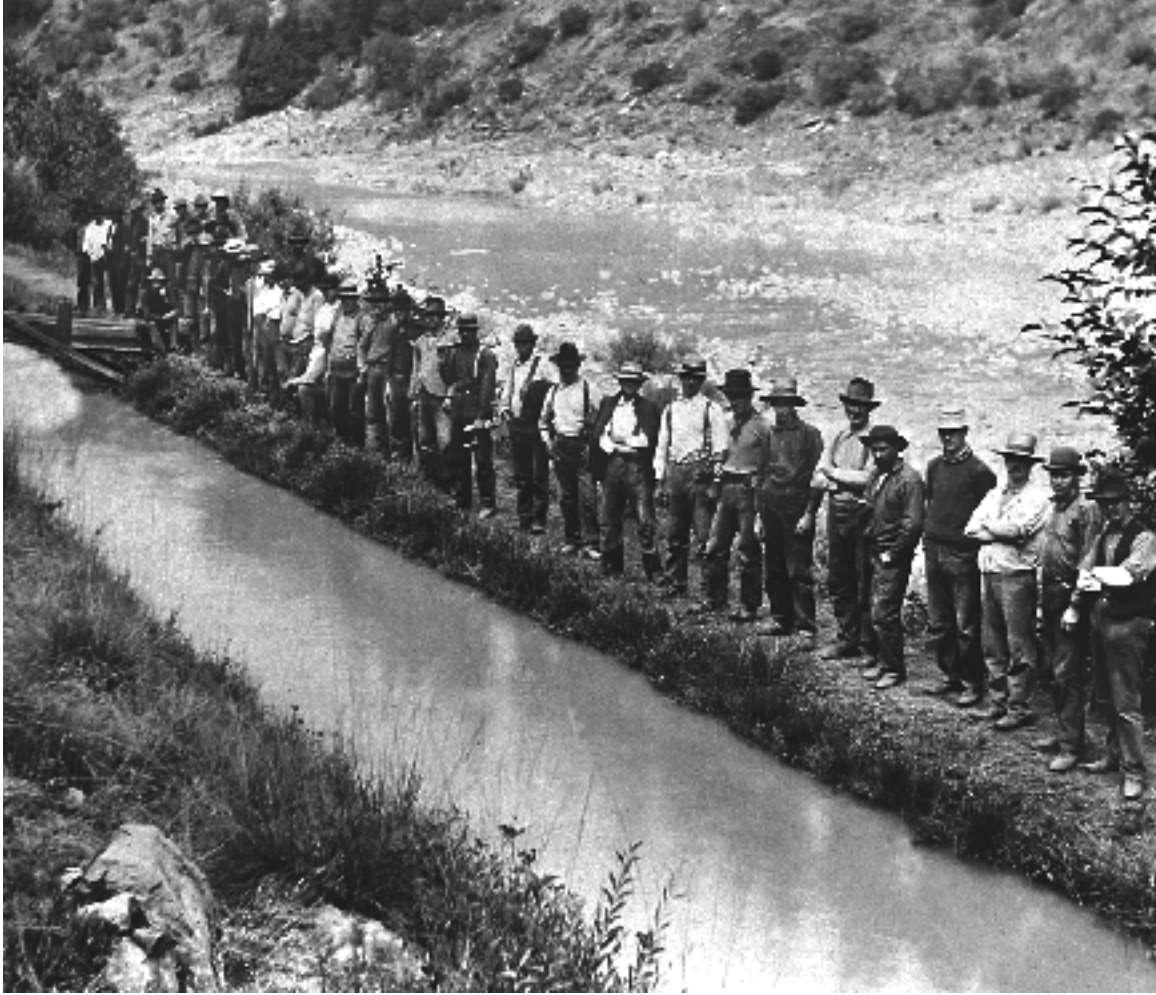




The interior valley towns of Sacramento and Stockton also grew dramatically as prospectors passed through. Just prior to and following its admission to the Union, California's population grew from 18,000 at the time of the gold discovery to 165,000 in less than three years. By the time work on the canal began, the influx of "49ers" had pushed the population to 300,000. San Francisco had 35,000 in 1850 while the mining counties had 120,000 in 1852. This initial surge was driven by gold, but the development of the state would soon be driven by other factors. With the huge increase in population, the vast herds of cattle valued at \$4 a head in 1846 rose to \$500 a head (temporarily) in 1850. With irrigation,

the valleys became the greatest food producing area on earth. By the end of the century, California produced an amazing volume of wheat, more cotton than any state but Texas, two thirds of the nation's oranges, over 80 percent of the nation's wine, and 90 percent of the lemons. The agricultural products quickly exceeded in value all the gold the state ever produced.





THE “BIG DITCH” IS DUG

Meanwhile, the canal on the American River was completed at a cost of \$180,000, or \$3.6 million in today’s dollars. In two years, the company’s original stock of \$150,000, sold at 600 shares of \$250, had doubled. In 1855 and early 1856, \$128,000 worth of water was sold, most of it to the mining camps at Rattlesnake and Mississippi bars.

The entrepreneurs behind the “big ditch” quickly discovered that the

American River would not be held back for long, however. A flood in March 1855 completely washed out the “crib” dam of rock. It was rebuilt but damaged the next year at a cost of \$5,000. In the massive flood of 1862, the dam and one mile of flume were destroyed. The dam was once again rebuilt, this time one mile downstream, at a cost of \$15,000. But further destruction was not that far away, due, in part, to the extraordinary environmental toll exacted by hydraulic mining.

A LANDSCAPE FOREVER ALTERED

Following a succession in which gold was first panned from river bottoms, then shoveled into wooden sluice boxes, miners unleashed the power of water against the earth itself, using cannon-like mechanisms to blast hillsides at 120 mph. According to University of Iowa historian Malcolm J. Rohrbahr, the practice further demonstrated the reliance by miners on a stable water supply. “Providing water to miners on a large and small scale in the bars and

camps became an auxiliary economic enterprise almost as significant as mining itself,” he wrote in *Days of Gold, the California Gold Rush and the American Nation*.

But the increased yield of hydraulic mining was more than offset by the staggering amount of damage caused as men virtually wiped out entire hillsides. The mud, sand and gravel washed downstream and clogged rivers, which then flooded their banks during heavy winters.

HYDRAULIC MINING WIPED OUT ENTIRE HILLSIDES.



FLOODS TAKE THEIR TOLL

The first years of the American River Water and Mining Company's operation were marked by flood-related setback. Fast moving waters heavily damaged the dam on December 13, 1864, causing nearly a year's worth of repairs. Another flood washed out the dam and part of the canal on Christmas Day, 1867. The constant cycle of damage and repair began to exasper-

ate the company. Profits from one year were being used to make repairs to the dam and the canal, while the demand for water by miners was decreasing. Sales of water for agricultural irrigation were picking up, but not enough to reverse the tide of red ink. At one point, the company had to sign an agreement with the Bear River Water and Mining Company to purchase water for the canal. On March 21, 1870, all

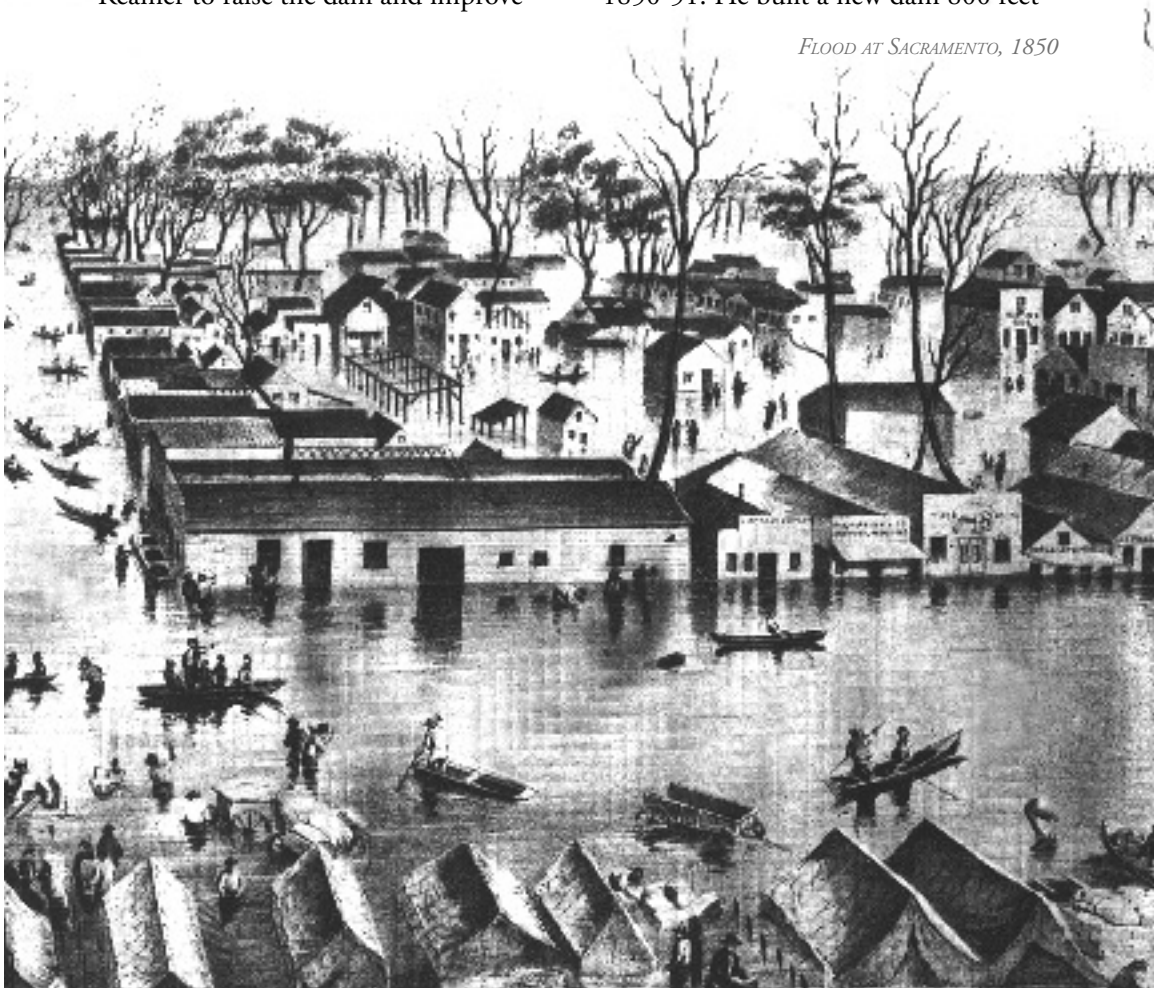


interests of the American River Water and Mining Company were sold for \$10,000 to George W. Reamer, who proceeded to construct a new dam. Reamer, a native New Yorker who came west in 1849, owned mining and water interests in the Gold Country.

For two years, mild winters spared the dam, known as Reamer Dam. The accommodating conditions enabled Reamer to raise the dam and improve

the canal. Reamer Dam seemed to be indestructible, but a series of floods in 1874-75 carried the dam away, along with Reamer's ownership of the company. Unable to finance the construction of a new dam, he sold what was left of his investment to businessman Fred Birdsall for \$42,000 on April 19, 1875. Birdsall had built one of the first ditches in the state at Coloma in 1850-51. He built a new dam 800 feet

FLOOD AT SACRAMENTO, 1850



below the Reamer site using 12" x 12" cedar timbers, bolted together in five foot squares and reinforced with steel rod. The project was completed in late 1880 at a cost of \$14,000.

THE ARRIVAL OF C.W. CLARKE

Birdsall ran the company for more than a decade before selling it to cattle magnate Crawford W. Clarke on March 1, 1887. The company, which became known as the C.W. Clarke



Water Company, was a profitable enterprise because of the strength of the Birdsall Dam and the growing need for agricultural irrigation. Clarke constructed a 35-acre reservoir one-half mile northeast of Oak and Santa Juanita avenues in Orangevale. Clarke in 1873

had purchased the property that is now Fair Oaks but did not develop the land or attach any water rights. By the time he acquired the big ditch, civic





and business leaders in Sacramento organized to break up the large Spanish land grants in an effort to make land available for more people. The land grants, which dated back to 1774, were designed to facilitate large cattle grazing operations as well as the establishment of pueblos and towns. Cattle ranches within land grants began at a minimum 4,500 acres.

During the latter part of the 19th century, land promoters began to encourage Midwesterners to relocate to the fertile grounds in the Sacramento Valley. The settlers were brought west

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The Sacramento Land and Colonization Company Inc. was founded with the mission of purchasing land and water rights to develop small, 10-acre farms in the outlying portions of Sacramento County. But Clarke and

his partners refused to sell water to the Colonization Company except at an enormous advance on the purchase price. A fair price counteroffer was refused for three weeks until Clarke finally agreed on a counteroffer.

By then, however, the Colonization Company had disbanded in disgust. Shortly thereafter, the Orange Vale Colonization Company formed to begin the process of dividing up 20,000 acres of property within the Rancho de San Juan and Rancho Del Paso land grants. On May 16, 1889, the Orange Vale Company signed a 10-year

contract with Clarke for guaranteed rights to one-third of the ditch capacity, a set water rights price and a new “swing ditch” for future water needs.

The contract with Orange Vale was one of several that had been agreed to since 1863, when a contract for irrigation water was made for farmers in the San Juan land grant. On two occasions,





plans had been made for the sale and delivery of water to the city of Sacramento. In 1861, drawings were made, costs estimated and a lot purchased for a reservoir at 15th and J streets. The plan was dropped until 1870 when Reamer revived it through a legislative act. But the cost of extending the canal for such a distance was more than Reamer could afford, and the proposal was scrapped.

By 1898, major repairs were needed on the Birdsall Dam, which had proved to be quite reliable. Instead of

By 1898, major repairs were needed on the Birdsall Dam, which had proved to be quite reliable. Instead of strengthening the dam, it was decided that a new masonry dam would be built across the downstream face. Construction began in early summer and was completed later in the year.

strengthening the dam, it was decided that a new masonry dam would be built across the downstream face.

Construction began in early summer and was completed later in the year. The dam, the sixth to serve the canal, extended 283 feet across one of the river canyons and covered most of an area known as Poverty Bar. It was 18 feet thick at the base, rose 16 feet above the riverbed and required 4,000 cubic yards to build. The total cost was \$75,000.

SEG&R CO. V.
CLARKE, ET AL

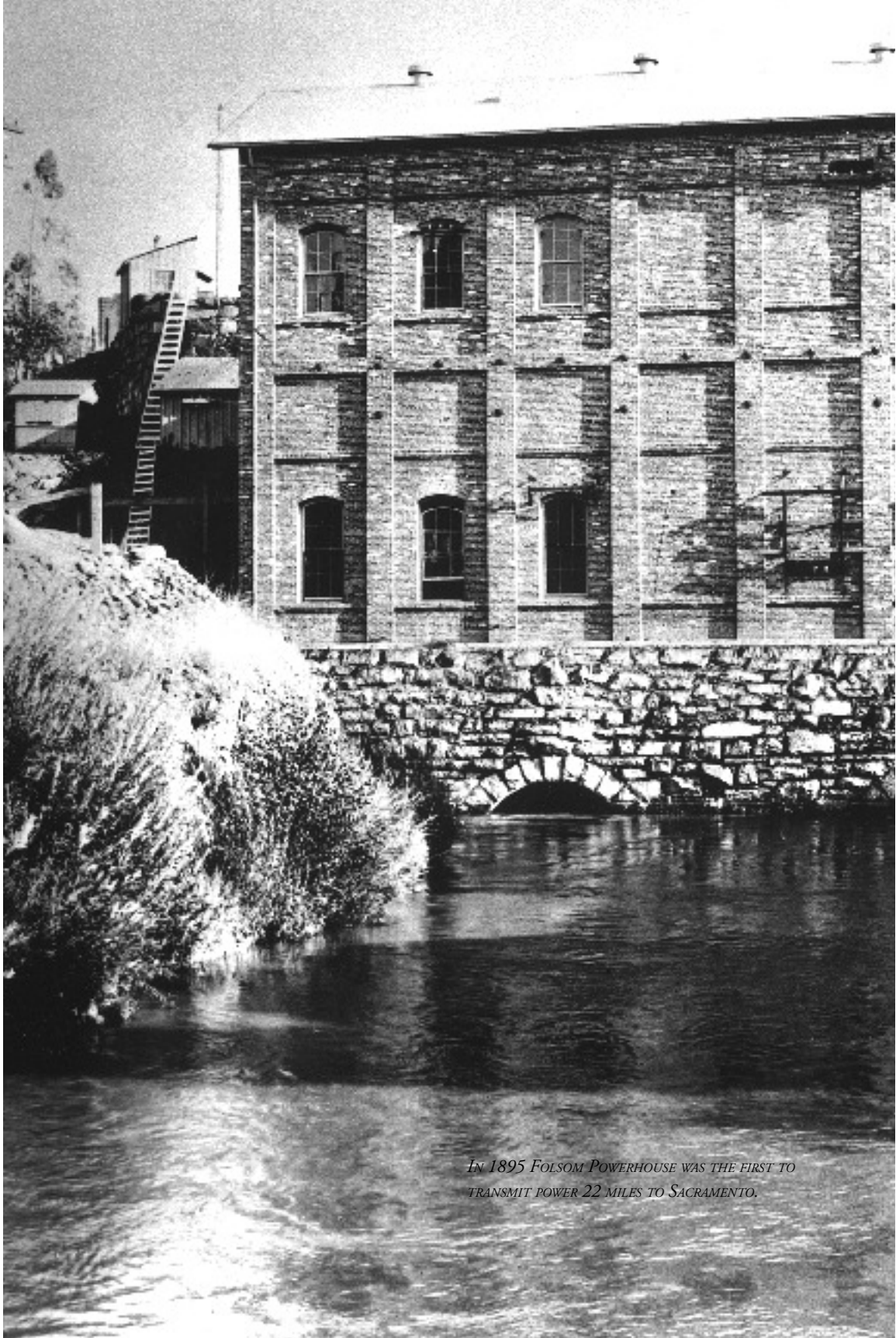
As the century turned, hydroelectric generation emerged as a way to provide power to the growing number of residents in the city and county of Sacramento. The Sacramento Electric, Gas and Railway Company diverted water from the river for the Folsom Power-

house, which generated electricity to operate the trolley cars and streetlights in Sacramento. The SEG&R, concerned about the apparent lack of water to run the turbines at the power plant, sued Clarke and his partners in 1898, claiming that excessive diversion for irrigation was impeding their ability to generate power, in some cases by as much as 500 horsepower. As a result, power service was interrupted to some customers. The case was heard in Sacramento Superior Court in July, with Clarke's lawyers arguing that the American River Water and Mining Company was not taking any more than the 3,000 inches it had a right to.

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The defense went on to deny the charge that work had been done to enlarge the canal. Instead, they explained how the continual build up of sediment required dredging operations from time to time. Clarke's lawyers also explained that the company would seek to divert more water should the demand exist. After hearing from

a host of witnesses, including some of the founding members of the American River Water and Mining Company, Judge J.W. Hughes on July 25 ruled in favor of the water company. He expressed sympathy for the plight of SEG&R, but noted that the strength of the testimony in support of Clarke meant "there is no weight to get around the decision which I have reached." The net result of the case was that the company's 3,000-inch water right was legitimized by adjudication. The next year, Clarke incorporated as the North Fork Ditch Company. ☺



*IN 1895 FOLSOM POWERHOUSE WAS THE FIRST TO
TRANSMIT POWER 22 MILES TO SACRAMENTO.*



CHAPTER TWO



A Choked River & Changing Times

As the North Fork Ditch Company entered a new century, it continued to grapple with the legacy of the previous 50 years of mining on the American River. Hydraulic operations removed entire mountainsides and choked the river with dirt and silt – as much as 100,000 parts per million. Farms and cities downstream were severely impacted by the runoff, or “slickens,” which inundated fields with a slimy layer of mud. At the peak of hydraulic mining in the late 1870s, single nozzles up to 9 inches in diameter were spewing as much as 25 million gallons of water in 24 hours. The amount of debris dislodged was immense, as reported in a 1917 geology study that estimated that 1 billion cubic yards of residue were washed away from 1854-1884. By comparison, the 51-mile long Panama Canal was built with eight times less earth displaced.

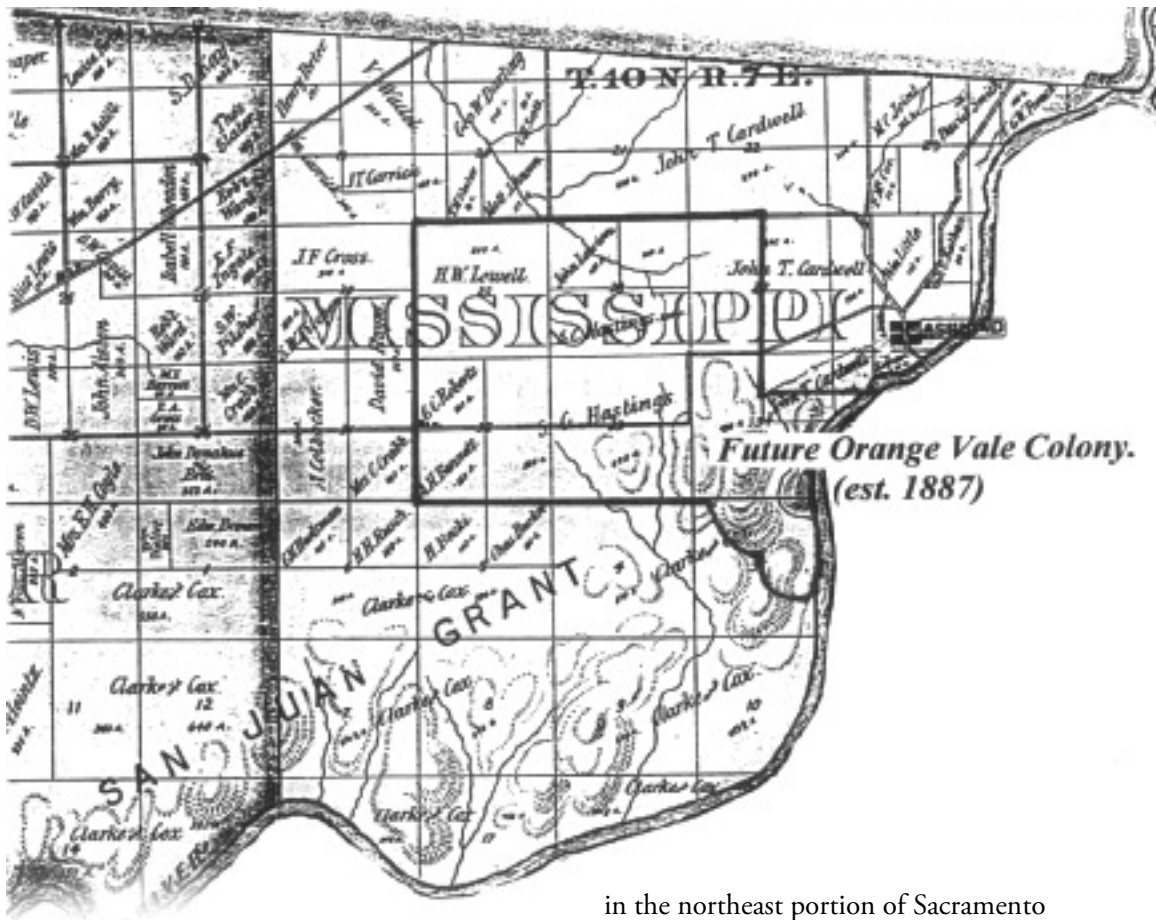
The end for hydraulic mining began in 1884 when a federal judge ordered a permanent end to its practice on the Yuba River. Many miners secretly continued the practice, and the matter was not finally resolved until 1893, when Congress created the California Debris Commission. This federal regulatory agency authorized construction of settling reservoirs to halt the flow of debris and promote the flow of clear river water.



In addition to hydraulic mining, the advent of gold dredges on the American River also caused significant environmental impacts. By that time, however, the damage had long since been done. Years of flushing mountainsides downstream had dramatic impacts. The bed of the confluence of the Feather and Yuba rivers was higher than the streets of Marysville, while the American River rose 10 feet at its confluence with the

DEBRIS DAMS WERE BUILT IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT THE "SLICKENS" FROM FLOWING DOWNSTREAM.





Sacramento. “Clam shell” diggers pulled up enormous quantities of riverbed and extracted gold, in the process creating turbidity on a massive scale. The problem would linger for several decades as the costs of gold production began to exceed profits. The last dredge ceased operation in 1962.

GROWTH IN NORTHEAST SACRAMENTO COUNTY

The transition from supplying water for mining purposes to supplying it for residential and agricultural use coincided with a period of rapid growth

in the northeast portion of Sacramento County. In 1888, the Orange Vale Colony was laid out and subdivided into 10- and 20-acre tracts for citrus trees and deciduous fruits. The Orange Vale Mutual Water Company formed with shares of stock issued to water users at one share per acre. Water was purchased from the North Fork Ditch Company, with early delivery accomplished with wooden tank wagons. Later, a contract would be signed for the company to supply Orange Vale with water through a main wood pipe linked to a reservoir.

In the early 1890s, some 6,000 acres of land near the American River was

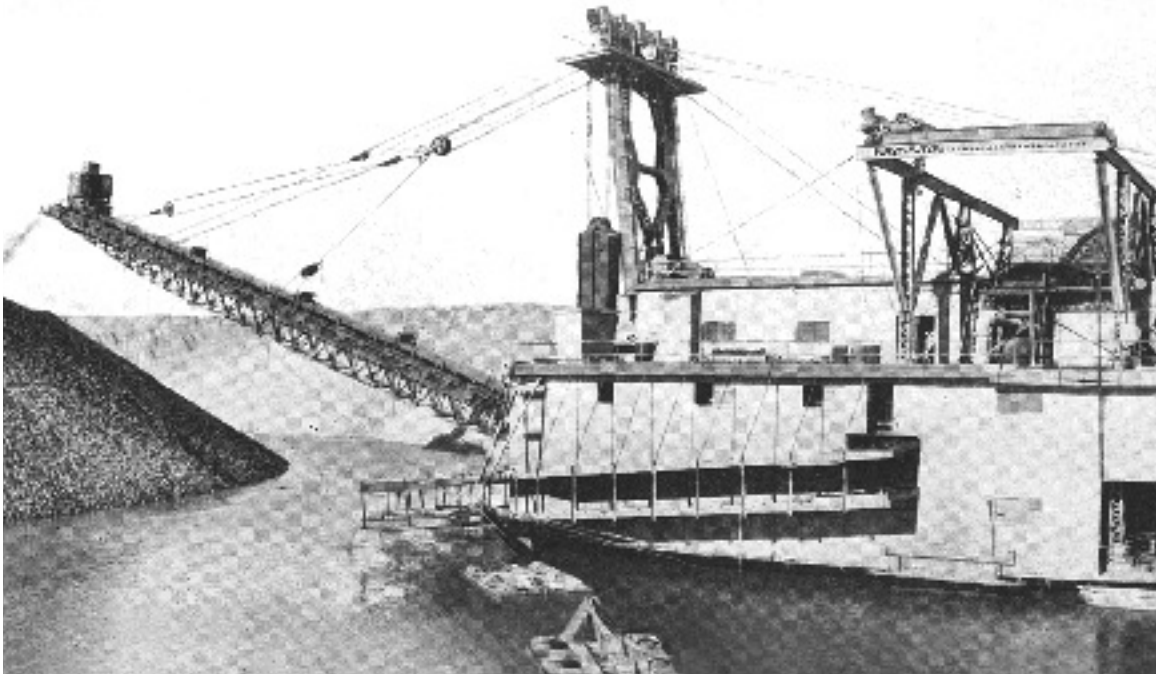
purchased, subdivided into smaller tracts, and named Fair Oaks. The area was advertised as the “Sunset Colony” in Chicago and in November 1895 the first train arrived with 150 “colonists” who began to develop groves of orange, olive and almond trees. Clarke owned land in Fair Oaks and stood to gain from the increasing need for water in the colony. This ownership and an implied understanding regarding the delivery of water would lead Fair Oaks residents to attain greater control over their water supply.

NORTH FORK CHANGES HANDS

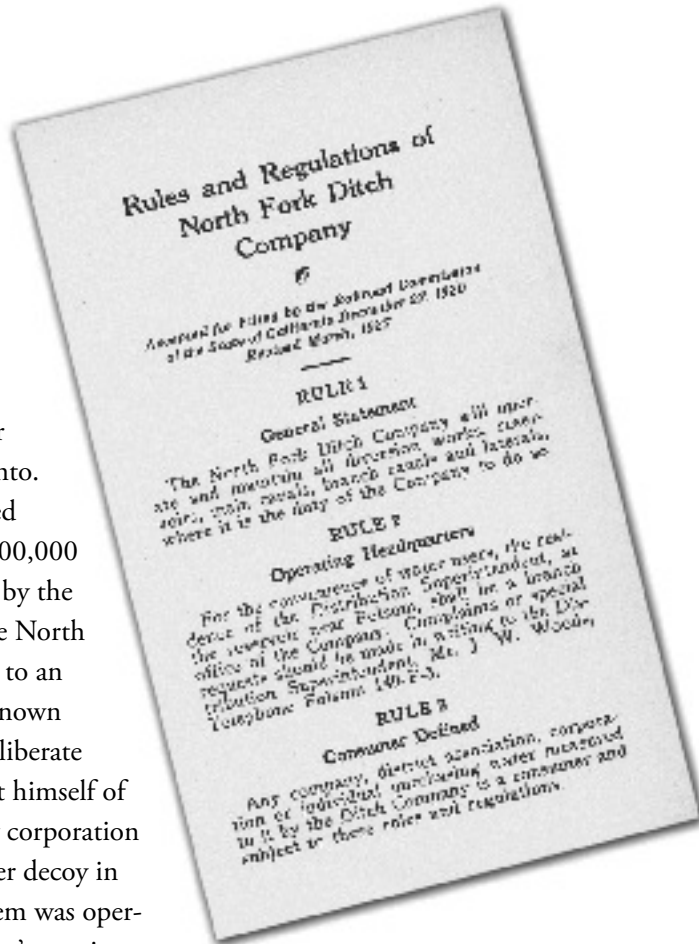
The North Fork Ditch Company never owned an office, instead renting a cubicle in the Forum Building in downtown Sacramento. In 1902, the company purchased 15.4 acres of land from Jessie and Isaac Hinkle to build a regulatory reservoir north of what is now the entrance to Folsom Dam on Auburn-Folsom Road. It is believed the transaction likely resulted in some type of concessions for the Hinkles, just as the miners contracted to dig the ditch received a certain amount of free water.

On July 1, 1909, the North Fork Ditch Company was sold to the

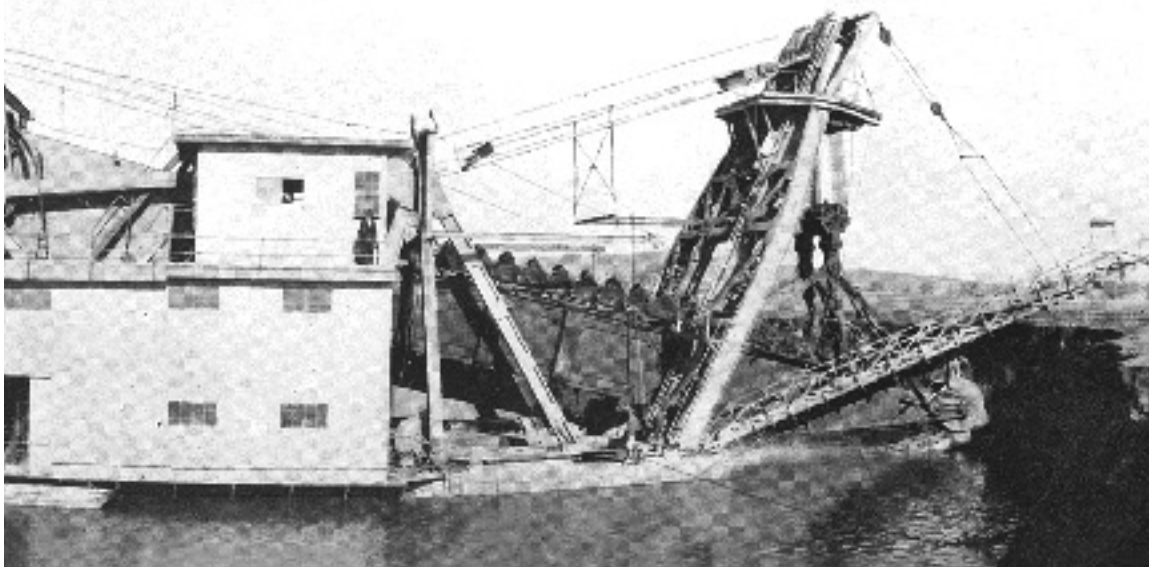
*THE LAST GOLD DREDGE CEASED OPERATION
IN 1962.*



American Canon Water Company, which was promoted by A.L. Darrow, president of the Fort Sutter National Bank in Sacramento. The purchase was transacted through the issuance of \$300,000 in bonds, which were held by the primary shareholders of the North Fork Company. According to an earlier account, "it is not known whether [the sale] was a deliberate attempt by Clarke to divest himself of the properties or a dummy corporation devised to obscure the water decoy in the sale of lands." The system was operated under American Canon's auspices for five years, but those in charge could not realize a profit on their business venture, partly because



of the excessive amount of water seepage and because of the lack of a profit margin calculated in water rates.



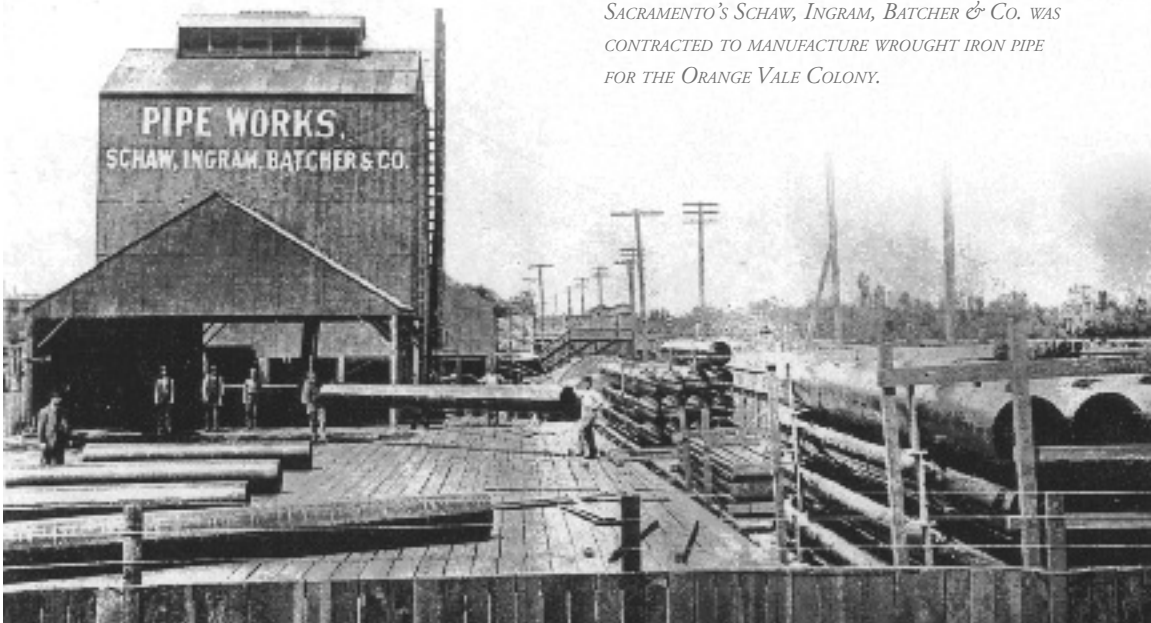
In 1914, ownership of the property reverted to the North Fork Ditch Company.

At the trustee's sale, the North Fork Company repurchased all the properties of the American Canon Water Company except for everything that had been acquired by American Canon since July 1, 1909. The sites not purchased included conveyance systems built by renowned engineer Stephen Kieffer (who would serve as the North Fork Company's first manager/engineer) in 1896 as well as delivery systems in Fair Oaks, Carmichael and Citrus Heights. In the end, North Fork was left only with the responsibility to supply water to a 28-inch pipe that ran

about 2-1/4 miles from Orangevale to the corner of the Fair Oaks Colony.

TIME TAKES ITS TOLL ON THE DITCH

The ditch that once again became property of the North Fork Company was showing signs of age in 1914. Essentially unchanged since its construction, the ditch and old wood flumes had become a liability. North Fork engineer and manager George Nickerson wrote in 1925 that by 1914, the loss of water by seepage through the unlined ditch and leaky wooden pipes was 70 percent between the head of the ditch and the point of delivery. "A ditch that was in as leaky a condition



SACRAMENTO'S SCHAW, INGRAM, BATCHER & Co. WAS CONTRACTED TO MANUFACTURE WROUGHT IRON PIPE FOR THE ORANGE VALE COLONY.

as this could not be operated at a profit when only 30% of the water diverted can be carried to actual customers,”

wrote Nickerson. The dilapidated conditions spurred a half-million dollar renovation project in which 35,000 feet of reinforced ditch linings and metal flumes were built. “The result is that we now irrigate nearly 13,000 acres of land; have an annual income of \$53,000; and instead of having transmission losses of 70%, as in 1914, the losses are now only 20% of the water diverted from the river,” a buoyant Nickerson reported.

IRRIGATION AND A LANDMARK LAW

Irrigation began in California at the early Spanish missions, where fruits and vegetables were grown with water channeled from small diversion dams. As more people arrived from the East Coast and beyond, they established homes and farms along streams or near springs to use the water for drinking



and irrigation. Pumps were used to draw the water from underground with great efficiency – by 1858 one Yolo County

farmer was able to lift 600 gallons per minute with a steam pump. As time passed, California farmers, politicians and ordinary citizens realized that the ability to irrigate millions of acres of land, especially in the Central Valley, could bring economic gain while providing some measure of flood control. In 1874, a report by the California State Agricultural Society determined that the total cost per mile of canal construction would be \$11,781, and the cost to install an irrigation system would be \$10 per acre. By that time, 139,570 acres were being irrigated in California. The report concluded that because of the cost and legality of the placement of irrigation systems, centralized government control would be necessary and investment would be best in the hands of the government or private industry.

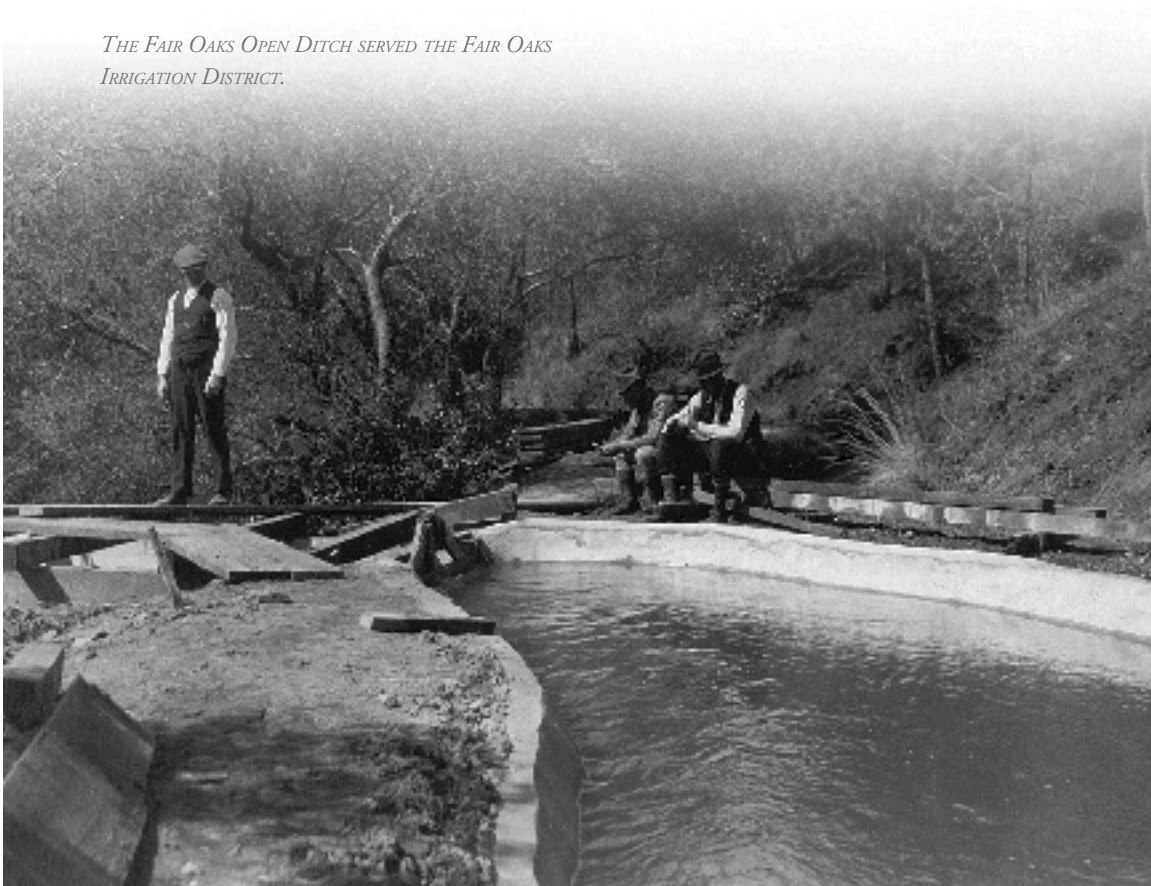
While Spanish law had recognized that river water belonged to those

who held possession of the river bank (riparian rights), the practice in the western United States was that those who first appropriated the water, regardless of their location, had a prior right. These two views clashed in California, leading to one of the State Supreme Court's most controversial decisions, *Lux v. Haggin*. The case was a clash of monied interests, as the powerful Miller and Lux Land and Cattle Company sought to wrest control of water rights from land

mogul and horse breeder James Ben Ali Haggin. In early 1886, the high court ruled, 4-3, for riparian rights in that case, which concerned the diversion of Kern River water. The court reasoned that under English common law, which California had adopted in 1850, riparian rights were guaranteed.

The *Lux* decision infuriated farmers, who forced the Legislature into a special session to resolve the situation. The result was the Wright Irrigation Act of 1887, authored by Assemblyman

THE FAIR OAKS OPEN DITCH SERVED THE FAIR OAKS IRRIGATION DISTRICT.



*The Lux decision
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The result was the Wright
Irrigation Act of 1887,
which authorized the
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more than 50 people or a
majority of landowners.*

Christopher C. Wright of Stanislaus County. The law authorized the establishment of irrigation districts, to be formed by more than 50 people or a majority of landowners. Irrigation districts were afforded the power to overcome riparian rights by condemnation and the doctrine of beneficial use, effectively dismantling the monopoly held over water rights by large landowners. While legal bickering over the Wright Act (the law was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court on appeal) continued, citizens began to organize to ensure a steady supply of water. By 1915, there were 57 irrigation districts in California, watering 29.2 percent of the acreage.

DISTRICTS TAKE HOLD IN FAIR OAKS AND CITRUS HEIGHTS

Among the new water districts was the Fair Oaks Irrigation District, which began March 16, 1917. The district purchased water from the North Fork Company to irrigate about 4,000 acres, where a wide variety of fruits, nuts and

vegetables were grown. The origins of the Fair Oaks district can be traced to the turn of the century and Clarke's large land holdings. Settlers arrived with the understanding that they would receive water in perpetuity from North Fork at a rate of \$3 per acre per year.

But in 1915, North Fork filed an application with state authorities for an adjustment of rates, a move that caused angry Fair Oaks residents to form the Fair Oaks Water Takers Association. The Association claimed that the rate hike was nothing more than price gouging and that Fair Oaks could construct its own water system for the price paid to North Fork. The California Railroad Commission, which then had jurisdiction over water rates, found on March 17, 1916, that no evidence existed that Clarke or the North Fork Company had ever used water rights to further the sale of lands. Commissioners did find, however, a pattern of uneven bill collection by the company and ordered that all customers be assessed at the same rate.

Three years after the formation of the Fair Oaks Irrigation District, the Citrus Heights Irrigation District was established for the purpose of supplying water to 225 farms on 3,157 acres. The Carmichael Irrigation District, formed in 1916, received water from the Fair Oaks system but complained that the North Fork Company was essentially being paid twice for the same water. The district started drilling wells and gradually became independent of the North Fork Company.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF DITCH IS EXPLORED

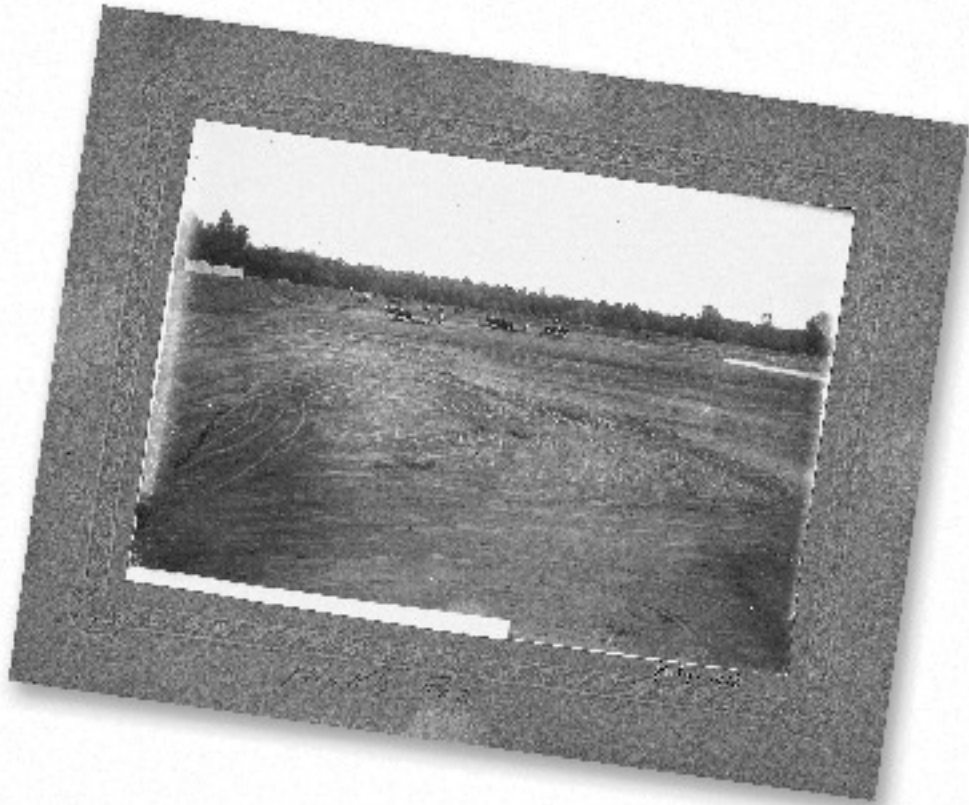
The Railroad Commission's finding that the North Fork Ditch Company

was not assessing all its customers at the same rate gave rise to the notion that the citizens served by the company would be better served by a publicly owned water company. On July 16, 1920, a committee of representatives associated with the water districts supplied by the company reported that it would be advantageous for the combined public entities to explore the purchase of the North Fork Ditch Company. This recommendation was made, in part, because of the growing demand for water and the company's apparent reluctance to expand its delivery capability.

“Those communities now taking water are in doubt as to the future,

THE NORTH FORK DITCH IN 1916.





HINKLE RESERVOIR WAS BUILT IN 1916.

while new communities are prevented from developing,” the report said. “In other words, with an unquestioned additional potential water supply available for further development of the country, such development is prevented by the limitations of a privately owned water supply.” The authors did not fault the North Fork Company for not expanding the supply/delivery system, but noted that the changing times warranted public ownership.

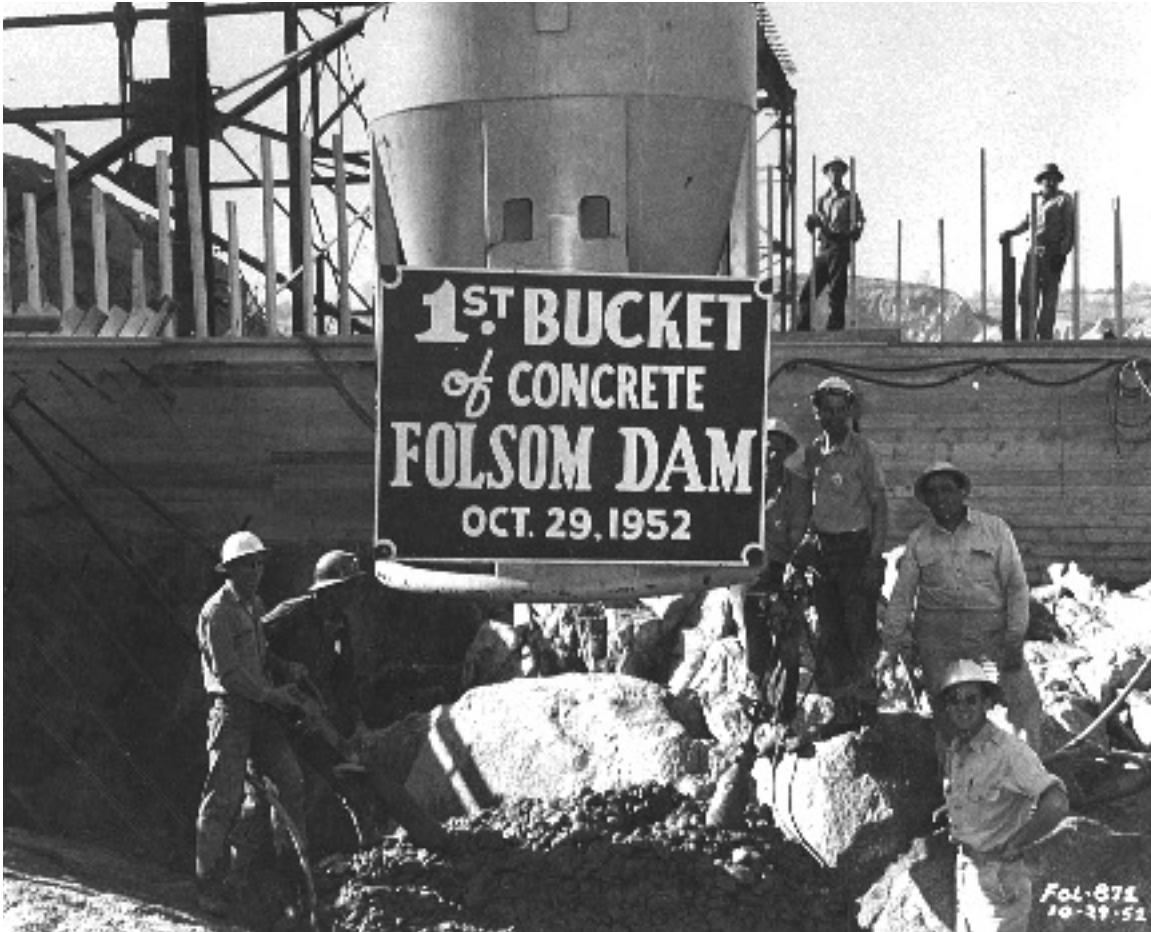
“These are days of public ownership and control of irrigation water supplies, and the private owners of such a supply – operating as a public utility for profit – find little encouragement in new financing,” they wrote.

Despite the momentum, it would be more than 30 years before public ownership became a reality. ☺

— CHAPTER — THREE

Floods and the Formation of a District

One of the features that made the Sacramento region so attractive to newcomers – the proximity of the American and Sacramento rivers – continued to wreak havoc periodically during the early decades of the new century. In response to a series of floods that struck between the mid-1800s and the early 1900s, the streets of downtown Sacramento were raised 10 feet from the Sacramento River to about 12th Street. The failure of levees north of Sacramento eventually resulted in the development of an integrated, comprehensive flood control plan for the Sacramento Valley. The plan was based on a system of levees, weirs and bypass channels designed to divert high flows away from homes and businesses. It received financial approval from the federal government in 1917.



The need for flood control coupled with an increased demand for water paved the way for the construction of Folsom Dam, an event that would have dramatic consequences on the physical properties of the North Fork Ditch Company.

CONGRESS INVESTS IN FLOOD PROTECTION

Despite the recurrence of floods in Sacramento and elsewhere throughout the country, officials continued to depend on levees as the primary means of flood protection. That policy was

AUTHORIZED IN 1944, FOLSOM DAM IS PART OF THE FEDERAL CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT,

finally changed in 1927, when a devastating flood hit the lower Mississippi River. The flood was the result of high waters from throughout the Mississippi River's drainage area (41 percent of the continental United States) coming together and inundating the lower Mississippi Valley. Between 250 and 500 people were killed, more than 16 million acres were flooded, and over 500,000 people were forced from their homes to refugee camps.

The need for flood control coupled with an increased demand for water paved the way for the construction of Folsom Dam, an event that would have dramatic consequences on the physical properties of the North Fork Ditch Company.

Clearly, depending on levees was not the answer. The chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) drew up a new plan requiring that the water be dispersed through controlled outlets and floodways as well as confined between levees. After lengthy debate, Congress approved this plan in the 1928 Flood Control Act and placed its implementation under the control of the Corps. This act launched what today is called the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. The project has prevented over \$100 billion worth of damages since 1928. Responding to the twin needs of flood protection and work relief, Congress passed the 1936 Flood Control Act, which declared that flood control was a proper activity of the federal government.

A DAM ON THE AMERICAN RIVER

Eight years later, Congress passed another flood control act, which included authorizing the Corps to construct a dam on the lower American River. By 1948, work was underway on

Folsom Dam, but it was “tangled by differences in plans, opinions, authorizations and interests,” according to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*. Differences emerged over the cost and scope of the

project, as officials debated a flood control vs. multipurpose dam. The former entailed the impoundment of 355,000 acre-feet of water, as authorized by Congress, the latter 1 million acre-feet, which was what the Corps was working on. Initial plans called for construction of an earth-filled dam, but experts later determined that a concrete dam with earth abutments was the best design.

The fracas between the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps over the extent of the dam’s operation resulted in the “Folsom formula,” which stated that multi-purpose dams were the responsibility of the Bureau, while dams and other works used exclusively for flood control came under the Corps’ authority. The formula, authored by California Rep. Clair Engle, came about because of the Bureau’s insistence that a flood control dam with 355,000 acre-feet capacity was inadequate for



WHEN A MAJOR FLOOD STRUCK IN 1955, SACRAMENTO WAS SPARED SERIOUS DAMAGE THANKS TO THE NEARLY COMPLETED FOLSOM DAM.

the conservation needs of the Central Valley. In October 1949, President Harry S Truman signed into law the Engle Act, which specified a reservoir capacity of 1 million acre feet for Folsom Dam, and that the facility was to be operated and maintained by the Bureau. Work on the dam proceeded during the early 1950s, and as the lake began to form, discussions began for delivery of water to the North Fork Ditch Company.

NORTH FORK ACQUISITION REVISITED

While the Folsom Dam construction project proceeded, the idea of public purchase of the North Fork Ditch

Company was again explored. Owners of the company indicated a willingness to sell if local users could demonstrate the ability to pay for and operate the system. In 1947, directors of the Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks and Orange Vale water agencies organized an informal committee to study the present and future water needs of the region. Acquisition of the North Fork Ditch Company was considered as a means to ensure a reliable, long-term supply of water, given the impending creation of the Folsom reservoir.

“The most important reason for acquiring the North Fork Ditch Company is to gain control of the valuable water rights,” states a May

1, 1948, report, *Earning Power and Importance of North Fork Ditch Company to Present Water Users*. "If the present users acquire the system and own their water rights, they will then be in a strong position to bargain with the [Bureau of Reclamation]."

Despite the findings, the committee disbanded in 1949 without taking action. But the issue remained at the forefront, and was put back into the hands of a committee by Howard Greenhalgh, president of the Orange Vale Mutual Water Company. This time, the group's sole purpose was to study the feasibility of developing or acquiring a publicly owned water system. In July 1953, the company set

a base price of \$650,000 plus payback for capital improvements made by the time of purchase.

By late 1953, the committee concluded that acquisition of the North Fork Ditch Company was a first step toward achieving an adequate and dependable water supply. Public ownership was favored because users would control the rights to the water from Folsom Lake and would be in the position to negotiate for additional water. A public entity could be self-supporting, based on the North Fork Company's record of earnings, while improvement and extension of the canal system could be done more effectively, the committee concluded.



THE GROWTH OF WATER DISTRICTS

The discussion of the possible purchase of the North Fork Ditch Company presaged the cooperation that would take place in the formation of the San Juan Suburban Water District. The new form of local government known as districts quickly took hold and by the early 1900s had spread to urban functions, including drinking water delivery systems, stormwater drainage and sanitation. Special district popularity flourished during the period of rapid growth and urbanization in the three decades following World War II. Districts were popular because they could be put in place quickly, had flexible boundaries and could provide citizens with the services they needed without a lot of bureaucracy.

The rate of population growth in California convinced state lawmakers to ensure that an adequate water delivery infrastructure was in place to accommodate the demand. Water districts were authorized through the California Water District Law of 1913. Districts fall under different categories, such as county or municipal, but the entity that would eventually become the San

Juan Water District was formed as a Community Services District (CSD), the first of its kind in the state. CSDs, which were authorized by a 1951 law, are empowered to provide water as well as a number of other services to residents. They are formed by a petition to a county board of supervisors, followed by an election. District board members serve on an at-large basis.

Through the years, questions have been raised about the necessity of retaining water districts in an effort to reduce overlap and waste while streamlining local government. District representatives have responded by pointing out that their agencies concentrate on doing one thing well, and are free of the competing demands faced by cities and counties. A publication by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) says it is the lack of a bureaucratic hierarchy that enables districts to provide such reliable service.

“Delivery of water is a capital-intensive, as opposed to labor-intensive, public service, with extensive facilities that can be operated by a relatively small staff,” according to ACWA. “The elected directors of a district are readily accessible to the public. In many

FAIR OAKS IRRIGATION DISTRICT



...and its Water Supply
Development Program

RULES AND REGULATIONS

ORANGEVALE WATER COMPANY

AS AMENDED JANUARY 11, 1919

RULE 1

The rules of the Orangevale Water Company shall be the basis of its decisions. Compliance or non-compliance shall be made known to the Director.

RULE 2

Applications for water.
Applications for water shall be made on regular business days furnished by the Director. These applications shall be filed in the office of the Director in Orangevale. The rate will be charged for each acre. The rate will be charged for every acre that has not been irrigated.

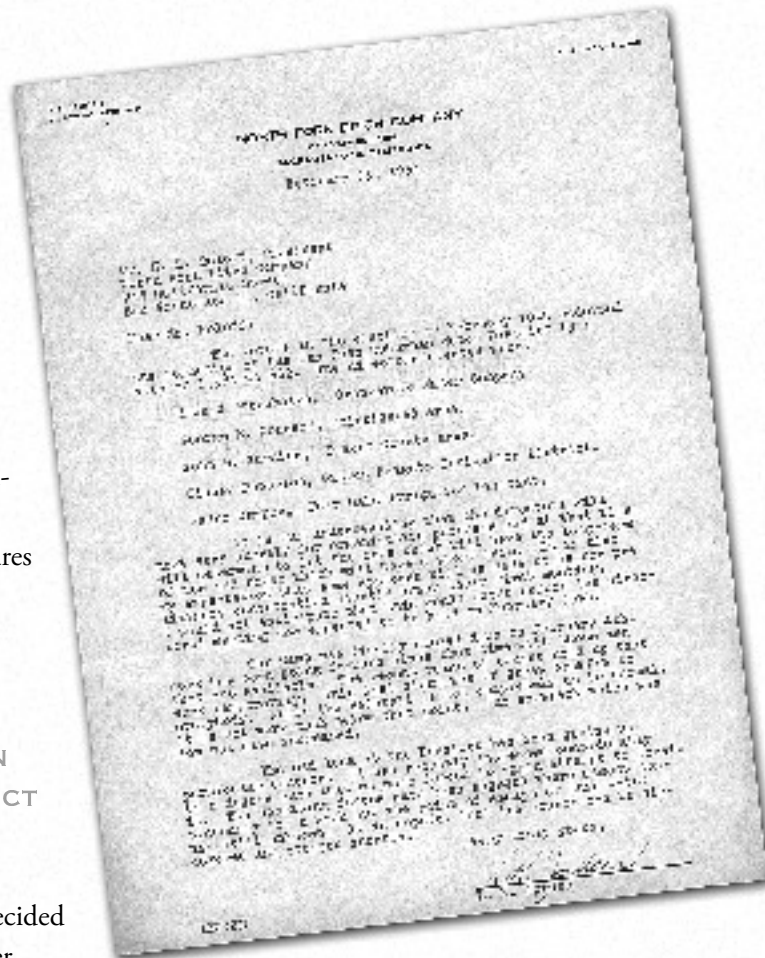
WATER DISTRICTS WERE AUTHORIZED THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA WATER DISTRICT LAW OF 1913, AND SPECIAL DISTRICT POPULARITY FLOURISHED DURING THE PERIOD OF RAPID GROWTH AND URBANIZATION IN THE THREE DECADES FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II.

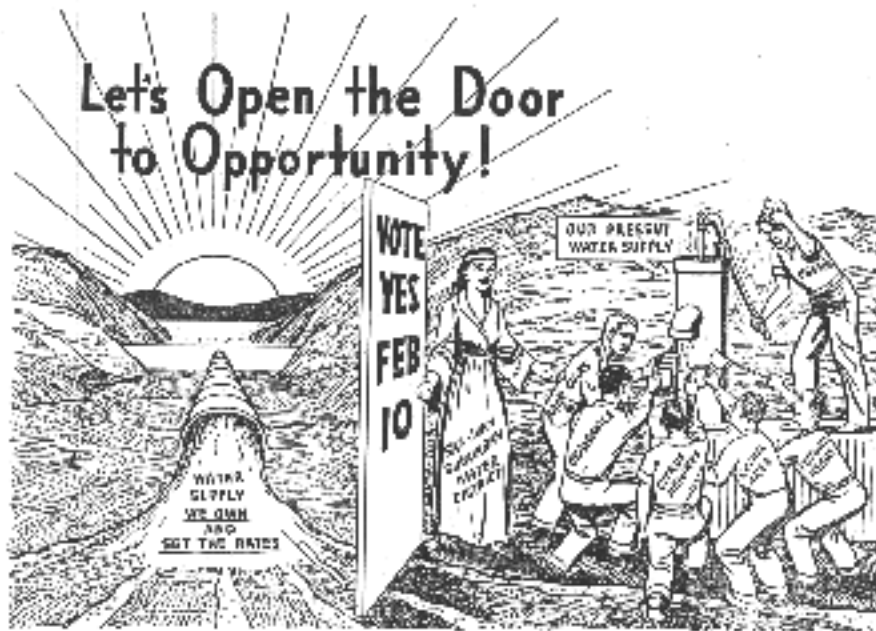
districts, the district manager directly supervises all of the district employees. In these circumstances there is neither incentive nor rationale to construct the complex bureaucratic structures associated with city and county governments.”

THE SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT IS FORMED

After study and discussion, it was decided that a “master” water district should be formed under the CSD law, which had been amended in 1953 for just such a purpose. The study committee believed that the district should be formed to include the three existing water districts as well as lands contiguous or between the districts. A petition sponsoring the creation of the new district was sent to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. While the petition was

circulated, retail customers of the North Fork Company and others in Placer County asked to be included in the master district. Folsom residents west of the Rainbow Bridge were included as well, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission. The proposed property boundaries were enlarged and Placer County representatives were added to the sponsoring committee. The proposed district was not without





Protect Our Water Resources....

No Change in Local Districts....

VOTE 'YES'
FEBRUARY 10

its critics, however. In late 1953, a small but vocal contingent opposed the plan for several reasons. Some characterized the district as a power grab by Fair Oaks politicians that was being rushed to a vote. Others said the purchase of the North Fork

Company was unnecessary and that public ownership of a utility would be less efficient and more expensive. There also was the fear that taxpayers would be stuck with the burden of paying off the purchase and that liens would be placed on real estate.

But on the whole, sentiment ran toward approving the formation of the new water district. A January 28, 1954, *Sacramento Bee* editorial offered its support for the district:

“The people [of northern Sacramento County and Placer County] have a water problem. The present supply is privately owned. At the current rate of growth, it will not be long before new sources are needed. . . . Once [the district] is set up, the people can decide how much water they want to buy, what kind of distribution system they

*On February 10, 1954,
nearly two-thirds of
the voters approved the
formation of the San Juan
Suburban Water District.
The district was named
San Juan after the Spanish
land grant of Rancho del
San Juan that comprised
the area in the 18th
and 19th centuries.*

want to set up and how they want to finance it. . . . Other sections of the state want the water. . . . It behooves the residents of the proposed San Juan Suburban Water District to act while they have time. . . . Unless they vote yes . . . they are dead

ducks so far as getting water from the Folsom project is concerned.”

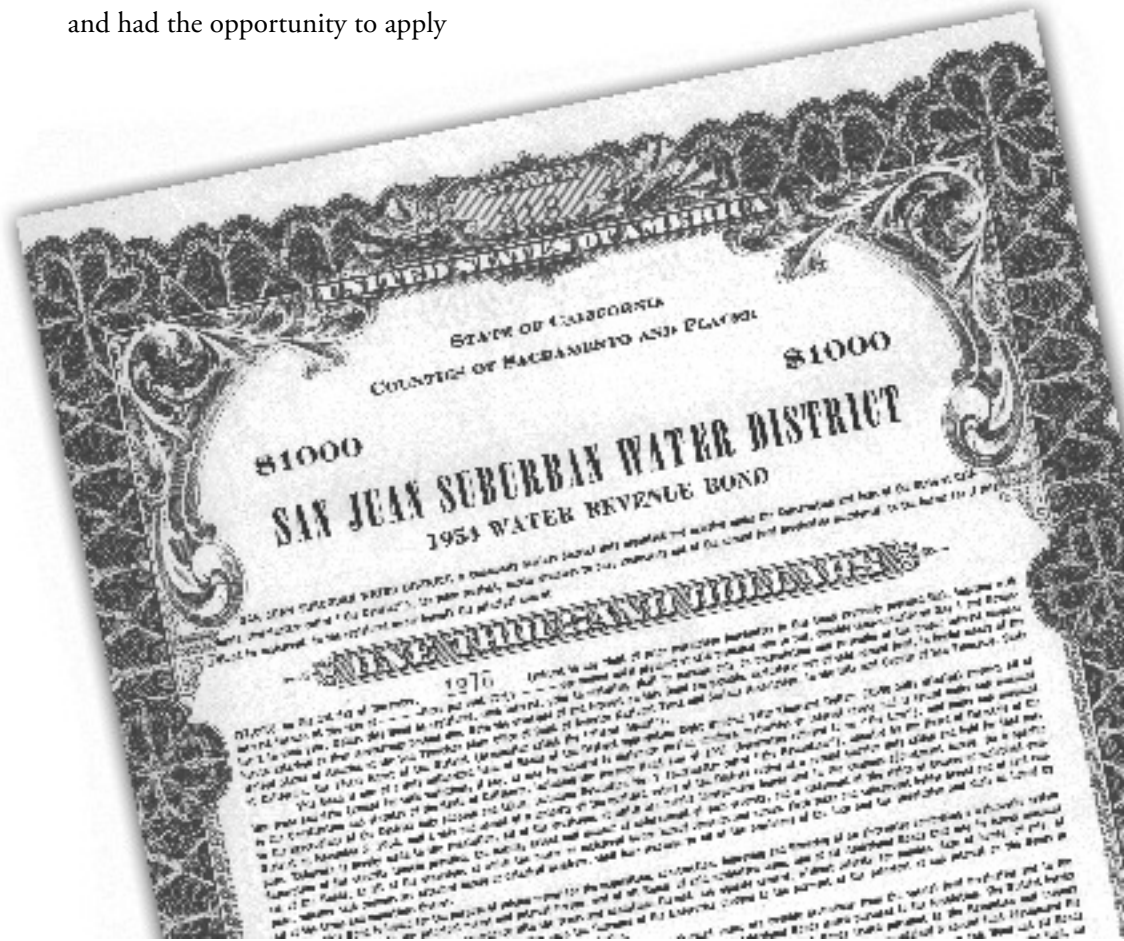
On February 10, 1954, nearly two-thirds of the voters approved the formation of the San Juan Suburban Water District. The district was named San Juan after the Spanish land grant of Rancho del San Juan that comprised the area in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The five board members, chosen on an at-large basis, were Howard Greenhalgh, who was elected president, George E. Johnson, vice president, Pedro Campoy, a Fair Oaks director, John H. Jardine of Placer County and Sidney N. Peterson, president of the Citrus Heights Irrigation District. The district agreed to purchase the water distribution system from the North Fork Ditch Company for \$600,000, plus \$20,000 for capital improvements

made during the first six months of 1954. The district put up \$23,500 in short-term notes to get started and levied a tax of 15 cents per \$100 of assessed, taxable property. Eventually, the board proposed \$850,000 in revenue bonds to be approved by the voters. In a *Report to the People* sent in September 1954, the board explained its proposed purchase of the North Fork Company:

“Suppose you were renting a home and had the opportunity to apply

your rent money on the purchase of the place, without any interest in the rent, without any down payment, and without putting a mortgage on the property. Purchase of the North Fork Ditch Company by the people of the San Juan Suburban Water District is exactly that kind of offer. The purchase would pay for itself with no increase in the wholesale rate, for the water sold to the individual districts. The





people would then own and control the water supply, with the individual water districts retaining control of the local distribution.” Customers were charged a flat rate of \$3.50 per month for their water.

AN AGREEMENT FOR WATER

The San Juan Suburban Water District would not have been started had it not been for the agreement with the federal government that resulted in the annual, guaranteed delivery of 33,000 acre-feet of water in perpetuity for homes, businesses and farms. Beginning in 1951, representatives with the Bureau and the North Fork

Ditch Company met to discuss how water service was to continue as Folsom Dam began to take shape. A March 20, 1952, memorandum by the Bureau confirmed North Fork’s right to divert the 33,000 acre-feet from the river at a maximum rate of 75 cubic feet per second (cfs), or about 34,000 gallons per minute. The water right was derived from the original claim staked by North Fork in 1854, the 1898 court case that adjudicated the figure and the diversion permit granted by the state Division of Water Rights in 1932.

Two years later, on April 12, 1954, the North Fork Ditch Company and the federal government reached an

agreement that formally acknowledged North Fork's water right and provided that the government would build conveyance facilities to deliver the guaranteed water from Folsom Lake to a new storage reservoir. Just before Christmas 1954, ownership of the North Fork Ditch Company passed to the San Juan Suburban Water District.

On May 5, 1956, a major dedication ceremony and celebration marked Folsom Dam's completion. And in 1957, water began to flow from the lake to Hinkle Reservoir, which had been built in 1916. The people of northern Sacramento and Placer counties would continue to benefit from the flow of the American River. ∞

*ON MAY 5, 1956, A MAJOR DEDICATION CEREMONY
AND CELEBRATION MARKS FOLSOM DAM'S
COMPLETION.*





FOUR

CHAPTER



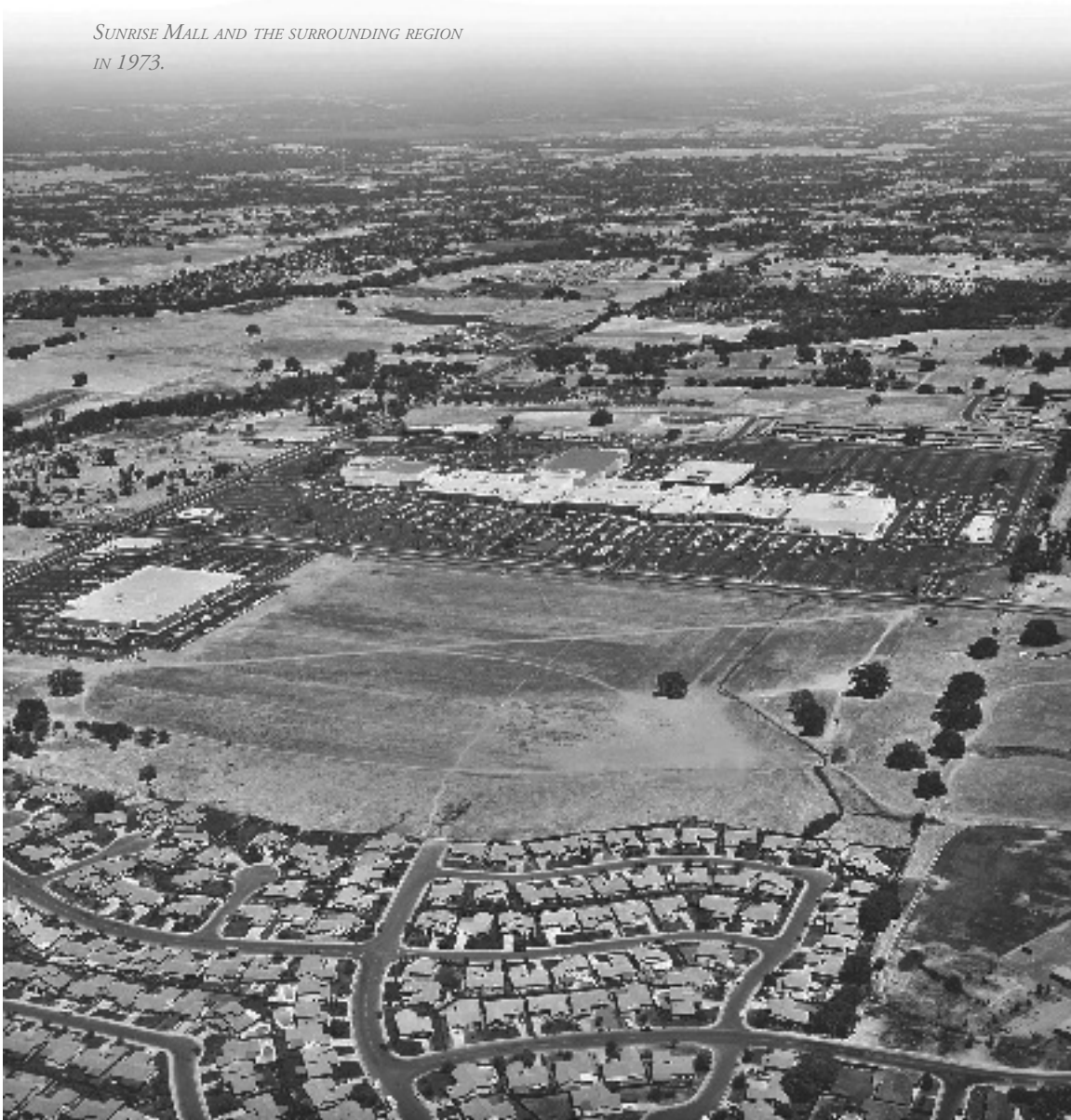
Challenges of a New Era

In the late 1960s, the Aerojet Corporation, a major employer in eastern Sacramento County, laid off thousands of workers. The resulting economic downturn had a direct impact on the San Juan Suburban Water District, where many former Aerojet workers lived. Some, unable to maintain mortgage payments, simply walked away from their homes. Consequently, San Juan had more water than paying customers. Years earlier, the board, anticipating a certain amount of growth in its service area, had negotiated a contract for an additional 40,000 acre-feet of water per year from the Bureau. But by 1967, faced with paying for a large amount of water it wasn't using, the Bureau worked out a formula for the district's future needs and reduced the contracted amount to 11,200 acre-feet. It was an action that would have far-reaching consequences.

Slowly but surely, the regional economy rebounded, and the San Juan Suburban Water District continued its role as both a wholesale and retail supplier of water to 100,000 people

in Orangevale, Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks and parts of the city of Folsom and south Placer County. The district's board of directors recognized the need for additional water, and embarked on

*SUNRISE MALL AND THE SURROUNDING REGION
IN 1973.*



the arduous process of reacquiring the rights to 28,800 acre-feet from the federal government. While that process was underway, the district was aided by the Placer County Water Agency, which in 1972 agreed to deliver up to 25,000 acre-feet of water per year for San Juan to use for its Placer County customers only.

Meanwhile, it became increasingly clear that the district's water delivery system, built to supply the needs of 19th century residents, would have to be upgraded to meet the stricter health standards imposed by federal and state regulatory agencies.

What this meant to the district was that something would have to be done about the more than two miles of open and unlined ditches that remained from the North Fork Ditch Company era. Some would argue that the cold, clear water delivered through the trusty canal system was safe for consumption, but the threat of adverse health effects brought on by microorganisms spurred officials to order a stricter degree of water treatment. A state health official

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declared that San Juan had the largest unfiltered water system in the state and that the delivery system was the worst in the state. With that in mind, district board members launched a plan to bring the system in compliance with the regulatory standards of the day.

What was proposed was nothing less than an entire overhaul of the San Juan delivery and treatment system, and it would not come cheap. District customers were asked to indebt themselves in the form of \$4.2 million in general obligation bonds to complete the task, which included a state-of-the-art treatment plant. Water agency leaders in Fair Oaks, Citrus Heights and Orangevale endorsed the project.

"After they – the voters – have seen those ditches and realize what they mean to the overall health of district residents, I'm sure they'll vote to eliminate the hazard," wrote Mark Verke, board president, in a 1973 newsletter.

The vote was successful, and launched the district on a course that

*Water from Hinkle
Reservoir was conveyed to
a new pump station, where
it flowed into Sacramento*

*County via gravity
through two 54-inch
pipelines.*

would make it second to none in providing safe, reliable water. The days of open and unlined ditches came to an end as a pipeline replaced them. Water from Hinkle Reservoir was conveyed to a new pump station, where it flowed into Sacramento County via gravity through two 54-inch pipelines. At the center of it all was a 100-million-gallon-per-day treatment plant that would bear the name of original board member Sidney Peterson.

STRIKE

On Oct. 9, 1975, all San Juan operations and maintenance workers walked off the job in a wildcat strike. The union representing the workers ordered the walkout after the district's board refused to accept a tentative agreement on wages, benefits and work conditions that had been negotiated for seven months with a two-man negotiating committee of the board. The full board, which had progressed through three to four pages of the 10-page proposed contract, did not accept the agreement and asked that the workers stay on the job while negotiations continued.

The union refused, saying the board's action was the first time a public agency with which the union had negotiated had refused to accept its own negotiating committee's recommendation. But Verke, in a message to San Juan customers, said approval of the proposed contract would "abrogate" the board's right to govern the district. Replacement workers were hired and subject to harassment from the strikers; some quit. Meanwhile, the district had to increase its security costs to quell sporadic acts of vandalism.

The union sued the district to reinstate the fired workers but lost the case in court, which found that the strike was illegal and that the board was right in firing the workers. The case went to an appellate court, which upheld the lower court's finding about the strike's illegality.

"They should not have waited (as they did) until they had participated in an unlawful strike and then sought an after-the-fact injunction and damages following loss of their jobs, and mandate to restore them to their jobs," wrote the justices. "The strike was

unlawful and cannot be validated by proof that a worthy grievance existed.”

THE RAINS STOPPED

The year 1976 was a festive one in the United States as Americans celebrated the 200th anniversary of the nation's Declaration of Independence. But in the West, no one was celebrating the dry conditions brought on by a lackluster rainy season. Little did anyone know that 1976 was but a precursor to the driest year in California history.

The waning months of 1976 and first few weeks of 1977 brought virtually none of the plentiful precipitation that served to replenish the state's water supplies. Instead, for the first time since the Great Depression, California faced a severe drought. A 1976 report by the state Department of Water Resources put the issue in perspective:

“With 100 years of record in hand, television weather reporters and the Chamber of Commerce are prepared to prove that California has the greatest climate in the world,” the report said.

FOLSOM RESERVOIR DURING THE 1976-77 DROUGHT.



“But when the flooding rains descend or the rains simply bypass California, such events are described as ‘exceptional.’ California does have an exceptional climate – and many exceptional years.”

The punishing impact of the drought was felt because of the cumulative loss in precipitation. The winter of 1975-76 was only 65 percent of average, while the following year that figure fell to 45 percent. That, in turn, meant low surface storage, which is the core of the state’s plumbing system. The level of Folsom Lake dropped precipitously – about a foot every four days. The lake got so low the Bureau was forced to pump water from it for delivery to the district. However, as the lake continued to fall, that practice became less efficient. It was anticipated that flows into the lake would become almost nonexistent by Aug. 1.



The entire state felt the grip of the dry spell. Some rivers stopped running and some reservoirs dried up. Officials scrambled to compensate by pumping underground aquifers, but that measure

was fraught with complications. Water districts such as San Juan urged their customers to observe strict water conservation principles – such as minimizing use during peak demand periods – and backed up their plea with enforceable penalties.

San Juan’s conservation efforts paid off in less water use. For the first four months of 1977, when it was clear that the water supply was not going to improve, conservation policies resulted in a 32 percent reduction of water use compared to the same period a year earlier. The drought effectively ended with the arrival of heavy rains from January through March of 1978.

NEW TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY

With the drought over, the district turned its attention to improving the quality of the water provided to its customers. In 1979, water began to flow from the Peterson Treatment Plant, forever ending the days of rudimentary treatment. Within four years, the treatment process was upgraded through the installation of a state-of-the-art filtering system that is able to screen out microscopic contaminants. Once the treatment process was completed, water was stored in the new

Hinkle Reservoir, which at the time of its completion was the largest body of treated water in the world lined and covered with synthetic material.

The new covered reservoir, which began operating in August 1980, was enlarged from a 26 million-gallon capacity to 62 million gallons at a cost of \$1.4 million. The surface of the 13-acre, 22-foot deep reservoir is strong enough so that one or more people can walk across it without damaging the cover.

*SAN JUAN SUBURBAN WATER DISTRICT BUILT THIS
WATER TREATMENT PLANT IN THE LATE 1970S.*





FOLSOM DAM DURING 1986'S RECORD INFLOW.

THREE HOURS FROM DISASTER

A series of tropical storms roared through California in February 1986, causing flooding throughout the state. In the American River basin, the rains tested the river's flood control system to the very limit – and beyond. In Sacramento, nearly 10 inches of rain fell in an 11-day period. Meanwhile, 34 inches of rain – half a year's supply – fell at Blue Canyon in the Sierra Nevada. A temporary diversion dam at the Auburn Dam site could not withstand the pressure and burst, sending 100,000 acre-feet of water into Folsom Lake. The water level rose eight feet in two hours.

During a period of six days, a record inflow of 1.14 million acre-feet poured

into the lake, which has a six-day design of 987,000 acre-feet. As the water swelled behind the dam, officials fought a running battle to hold enough back so as not to overwhelm the levee system of the lower American River. Eventually, Folsom Dam releases hit a raging 130,000 cfs for 24 hours.

As the crisis continued, officials decided they would have to boost dam releases to 150,000 cfs to avert major catastrophe. The pressure of such a flow probably would have broken a levee somewhere in the system, but by a stroke of good fortune, the rain let up and the levees held. At that point, it was estimated by some officials just three more hours of rain would have breached the system, flooding as many as 30,000 homes.

A FUROR OVER METERS

It wasn't long after the deluge of rain that the district would face a deluge of criticism over its plan to install water meters for some of its retail customers. Meters, always controversial, are especially so in the Central Valley, where several communities enacted ordinances and charters that expressly forbid them. Nonetheless, in 1985-86, as the district sought to maintain pace with the growing demand for water while balancing a teetering budget, momentum built behind the installation of meters.

The process began in late 1985 as the board commissioned a study to determine if in fact meters were necessary to help rein in water use. The problem was that the controllers of the water, the Bureau, hadn't budgeted in freeing up additional acre-feet as part of the district's contract. Officials as early as 1984 anticipated the problem of severe shortages, and by the next year all of the district's 54,200 acre-feet of water

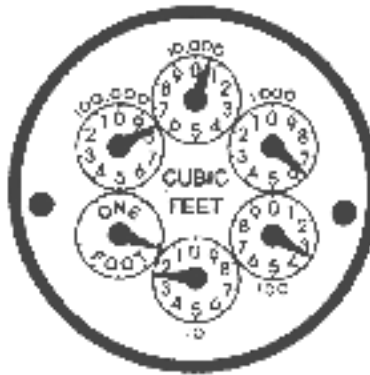
rights and contracts were exhausted. Meanwhile, the retail consumption rate was 724 gallons per person per day, far and above the 150-gallon national average. Quite simply, water use was outpacing projected growth. The district in the late 1960s estimated an annual

increase of 5 percent, but in the mid 1980s, use outran growth by 15 percent.

The push for meters resulted not only from the desire to encourage more efficient water use but to ensure a more equitable billing system. Under the flat rate structure, it was

determined that small parcel owners were subsidizing the large landowners that were able to irrigate their pastures and lawns for a much smaller proportional rate. Numbers-wise, that worked out to a 767 percent higher rate for customers on lots 1/4 acre or less and 457 percent for those on between 1/4 acre and 1 acre.

"As usual, the little guy gets the short end of the stick," wrote General Manager Jack Hansen in the district's



newsletter. The district figured that homeowners on the 1/4 acre lots were paying 27 cents for each 100 square feet of turf watered, residents of acre lots 16 cents and two-acre plus irrigators 3.5 cents. The flat rate contributed to the often-inadvertent waste of 12,000 acre-feet of water per year in the retail service area, the district estimated.

Convinced that something was needed to get control of the situation, the San Juan Board of Directors voted on May 28, 1986, to install meters on about 9,000 acres between Folsom Lake and Roseville. The decision was in part prompted by the recommendations of the commissioned study, which found that meters would conserve water and help pay the \$386,000 debt projected for fiscal year 1985-86, plus an expected \$426,000 shortfall in 1987. According to the study, nearly 75 percent of retail service customers would see a reduction in their rates after the installation of meters. The other 25 percent could see a moderate to significant rate increase.

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“Meters don’t increase water bills, they don’t force lifestyle changes and they certainly aren’t a punitive device,” the district reported in its newsletter. “They most assuredly do create customer equity by allowing every customer to use all the water they need and to pay for all the water they use; no more no less.”

Customers objected to the metering plan, in part because no mention was made of metering San Juan’s wholesale customers in Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks and Orangevale. Many residents had purchased large parcels to keep horses and cultivate orchards because of the inexpensive water.

The imposition of meters was not welcomed, and some threatened a court injunction or recall of board members to halt the proceedings. Eventually, a suit was filed, claiming among other things that the district had failed to conduct an environmental study, that meters would deny equal representation and that an artificial water shortage had been created.

The Board addressed the controversy in its newsletter, noting that “it is only natural that the introduction of a new policy would trigger concern. Fear of the unknown is always unsettling, especially when all the facts are not available.”

About six weeks after the board voted for meters, a judge refused to halt the process. Temporarily rebuffed, opponents banded together as the Citizens for Fair Water Policy and circulated a ballot measure to ban meters. Meanwhile, more than 100 meters were vandalized in the autumn

of 1986. In an effort to ease tensions, the board halted the installation of meters for at least a year and appointed a citizens advisory committee to make recommendations for metering alternatives.

The group voted 5-4 in favor of meters, prompting some residents in the retail service area to explore the possibility of forming their own water district. The idea never took flight, and in a few years the metering issue would be settled once and for all by the federal government.

THE PUSH FOR METERS IN 1985-86 WAS DRIVEN, IN PART, BY THE GROWING DEMAND FOR WATER IN THE DISTRICT'S SERVICE AREA.



DRY, DRIER AND DRIEST

The tumultuous rains of early 1986 saturated northern California and left Folsom Lake filled to the brim. But once again, atmospheric forces took the water away from the region, in a manner just as severe and persistent as a decade before. The drought of 1987-1992 would once again tax the ability of the San Juan Water District to serve its customers with an ever-shrinking supply of water. Officials would plead with customers to reduce water use, but the continued growth of the service area exacerbated the problem.

The dry spell was noteworthy for its length and its statewide impact. Reservoir storage dipped to 40 percent of average by the third year, and did not return to normal until 1994. By the end of February 1991, precipitation



in the northern Sierra Nevada stood at a dismal 20 percent of average. Heavy rains did occur at times during the five years, including the “March miracle” of 1991, but they were not enough to compensate for the drier than average conditions.

“In California, a ‘normal’ water year is more of a statistical abstraction between uncomfortable extremes of drought and flood than something actually experienced,” concluded a 1991 ACWA report.

San Juan, which averted water rationing in 1986 by purchasing 5,000 acre-feet of water from Folsom Lake, was forced to seek an emergency supply of water from the Bureau, a symptom of the struggle to attain a new water contract. In late April 1987, the agency agreed to sell the district extra water on the condition that it would only be available once the annual amount of 44,200 acre-feet was used. At the same time, the federal government urged a building halt in the area to avoid future shortages. A May 1987 *Sacramento Bee* editorial assigned blame to both sides in the tiff over water:

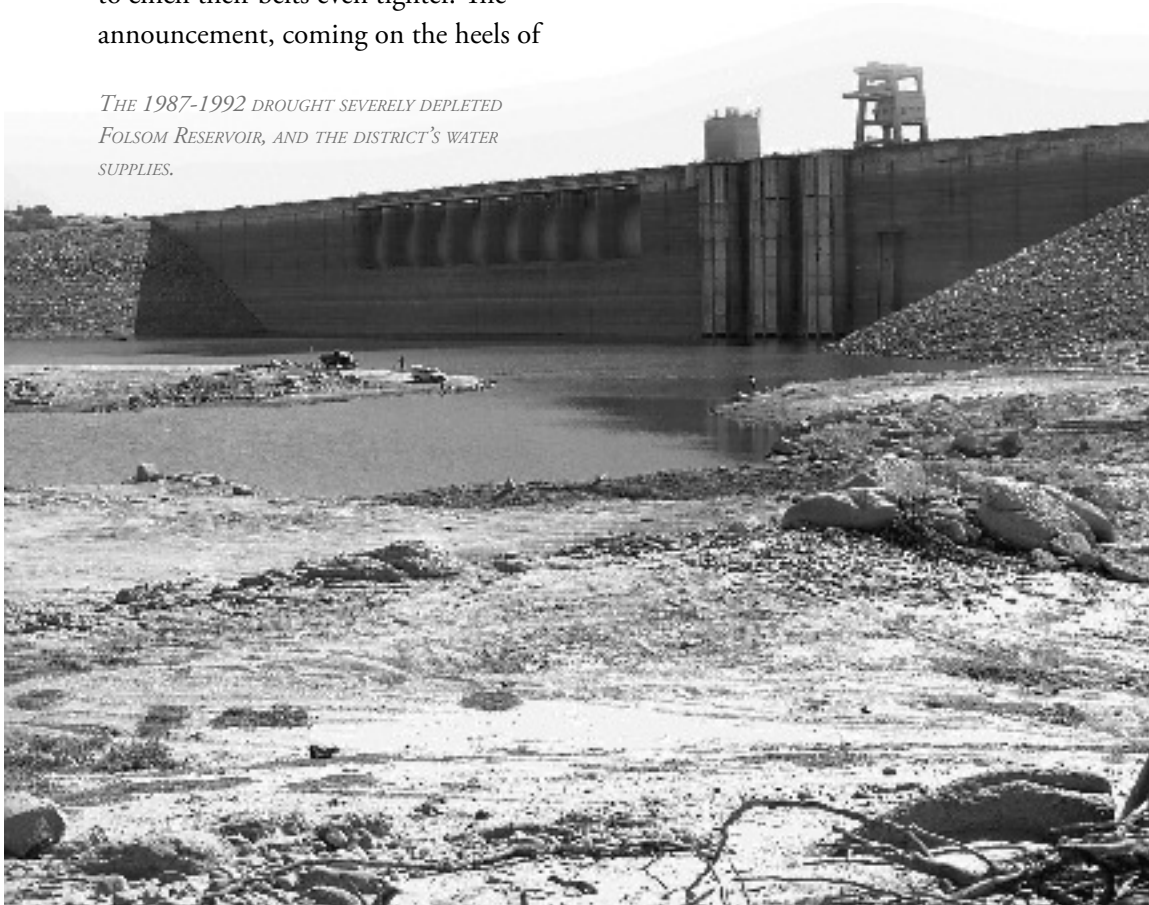
“There isn’t any doubt that the water shortage . . . is the consequence of some

bad judgments by the district . . . but that's no excuse for the way the Bureau of Reclamation has been manipulating the district's plight in a heavy-handed attempt to build support for its Auburn Dam project," the editors wrote.

A year later, the drought forced the district to buy additional water from the Bureau just to get through the end of 1988 – but at the increased cost of \$5,000. By February 1989, San Juan directors asked customers to cinch their belts even tighter. The announcement, coming on the heels of

the Bureau's proclamation that water supplies were 38 percent less than normal, sought a 15 percent reduction in use through voluntary conservation measures. Continued lack of abundant rain pushed the situation to near-crisis stage, as use outpaced what can be delivered from Folsom Lake. Conservation helped, but the continued surge in housing aggravated the problem. Eventually, San Juan's reserve reservoir dwindled to 20 million gallons.

THE 1987-1992 DROUGHT SEVERELY DEPLETED FOLSOM RESERVOIR, AND THE DISTRICT'S WATER SUPPLIES.



AUBURN DAM

Authorized by Congress in 1965, the Auburn Dam has undergone a controversial political journey that continues today with the debate over flood protection and water storage for the Sacramento Valley. The proposed 700-foot arched structure on the American River was part of the federal government's Central Valley Project, the massive plumbing system that

created an agricultural empire in California. Construction of the dam was halted in 1975 when engineers discovered that the dam site was situated on part of the same active fault system that rocked Oroville. This required a redesign of the dam to expand its concrete base to 400 feet thick, exploding the cost of the project to more than \$1 billion. The dam was abandoned in 1977.

WORK ON AUBURN DAM WAS HALTED IN 1975 WHEN ENGINEERS DISCOVERED THE DAM WAS SITUATED ON PART OF THE SAME ACTIVE EARTHQUAKE FAULT THAT ROCKED OROVILLE.



Water agencies have pushed for completion of the dam as a way to stabilize the ongoing problem of water supply. In December 1989, San Juan was one of many agencies that pledged to help finance a multipurpose Auburn Dam. Preliminary cost estimates concluded that

Sacramento-area water providers could pay for a smaller dam at the cost of \$1 per month per connection. About a year later, voters approved a measure that called on the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors to work out a financing plan for the dam. Despite that action, and frequent pressure from some elected officials, the Auburn Dam remains a concept that is continually talked about, but never acted upon.

Throughout the past 30 years, environmentalists and taxpayer groups have steadfastly opposed the Auburn Dam as an overpriced boondoggle that would cause irreparable harm to the ecology and recreation of the upper American River. A July 2002 *Los Angeles Times* editorial called it “a white

Throughout the past 30 years, environmentalists and taxpayer groups have steadfastly opposed the Auburn Dam as an overpriced boondoggle that would cause irreparable harm to the ecology and recreation of the upper American River.

elephant in modernist disguise, a remnant of a different era.”

THE HODGE DECISION

The lower American River is a significant ecological resource of the Sacramento Valley, providing habitat for hundreds of species of

fish, plants and wildlife, including the Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Colonists have also harnessed the river since the early days of western exploration. Jedediah Smith, the legendary mountain man who journeyed across the continent to California, camped along the river near the present site of California State University, Sacramento.

The use of the river has, at times, harmed the environment, most notably when tons of mining debris turned the river into cloudy soup. Later, the damming of the river at Folsom significantly altered flows all the way to the Sacramento River. Meanwhile, water users continued to withdraw their allotments from the river for agricultural and municipal use. One of those

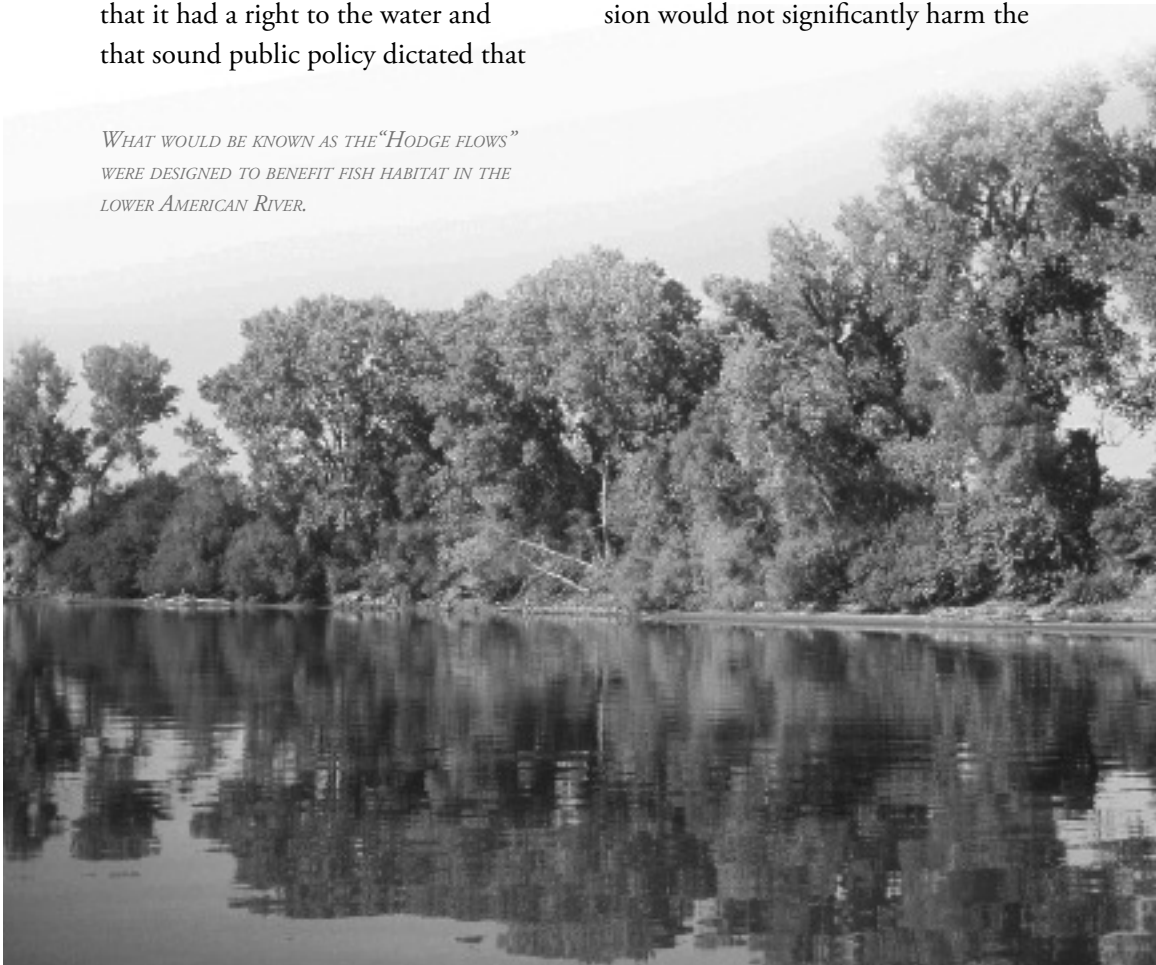
users, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), contracted with the Bureau of Reclamation in 1970 to receive 150,000 acre-feet per year from the river via the Folsom-South Canal.

Environmentalists sued EBMUD in 1972, on the basis that the diversion would cause substantial ecological harm to the riparian habitat, fisheries and recreation of the American River. The utility disagreed, saying that it had a right to the water and that sound public policy dictated that

drinking water be obtained from the best available source. Over the course of nearly 20 years the debate was waged in court, being heard twice in the state Supreme Court before reaching the U.S. Supreme Court.

A trial that began in 1984 in Alameda County included the presence of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) as a “referee.” The State Board found that: the diversion would not significantly harm the

*WHAT WOULD BE KNOWN AS THE “HODGE FLOWS”
WERE DESIGNED TO BENEFIT FISH HABITAT IN THE
LOWER AMERICAN RIVER.*



lower American River; there was enough water to meet present and projected demand; the river is the best source quality for drinking water and that the Folsom-South Canal was not an unreasonable point of diversion.

The Save the American River Association and the county of Sacramento disputed the State Board's stance, and in 1989 a trial commenced to answer several questions, primarily EBMUD's use of American River water as opposed to water taken from the Sacramento River.

Superior Court Judge Richard Hodge ruled that the water could be diverted, but that the utility was to abide by what would be known as "Hodge flows," which were designed to benefit fish habitat in the lower river. The Hodge flows impact San Juan and other water rights holders through the limitations placed on water diversions. Hodge ordered an additional 60,000 acre-feet held in Folsom Lake in mid-June if specific fish needs arose.



THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT IMPROVEMENT ACT

After decades of operation, issues related to the operation of the federal govern-

ment's Central Valley Project, which included Folsom Dam, came to a head in 1992 with passage of the CVP Improvement Act. The law, pushed by concern over efficient water use and the need for environmental restoration, stated that agencies receiving water from the Bureau would be required to install water meters. Also included was a yet-to-be-completed assessment of the environmental needs of the lower American River that has the potential to affect the water drawn by the district.

Absent a renewed contract from the Bureau for water from Folsom Reservoir, San Juan agreed to install meters for its direct customers. Eventually, all the wholesale customers in Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks and Orangethale will be likewise metered. Folsom residents in 2002 approved an anti-me-

ter measure that blocks the city from charging residents for retrofitting houses with water meters.



SIGNING THE WATER FORUM AGREEMENT WERE 40 REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT.

The city has a federal water contract that requires it to install meters.

A SHARED VISION FOR WATER

By the mid-1990s, it was evident that competing interests for water in the Sacramento Valley were pushing the supply capacity to the extreme. With that in mind, a diverse group of people from water agencies (including San Juan), commerce, agriculture, local government and environmental interests convened the Water Forum to come to grips with the future water needs of the growing region. Specifically, the Water Forum pledged to erect a framework to assure a reliable and safe water supply for the year 2030 and to preserve the environment of the lower American River.

A collaborative effort was needed because the need for water was universal, as was the interconnected-

ness of the myriad water supply agencies. “Unless we act now, our region will be facing water short-

ages, environmental degradation, groundwater contamination, threats to groundwater reliability and limits to economic prosperity,” officials noted in an introduction to the eventual Water Forum agreement. “Well intentioned but separate efforts by individual stakeholders [have] left everyone in gridlock.”

With that in mind, the Water Forum sought to resolve the array of water problems. The process was characterized by negotiations that emphasized the underlying reasons for the concerns of all those involved. What evolved was a seven-part strategy emphasizing a range of complementary actions, including decreased surface water diversions in drier years, actions to preserve flows necessary for fish survival in the lower American, water conservation and a watchdog apparatus to ensure the terms of the agreement are adhered to.



As part of the new emphasis on conjunctive use between ground-water and surface water, San Juan began providing water to the Northridge Water District, which merged with the Arcade Water District in early 2002

to form the Sacramento Suburban Water District. In 1998, a \$32 million multi-agency pipeline project was completed, bringing water from Folsom Lake to points west via a large diameter transmission pipeline. The project has helped relieve the overdependence on groundwater in districts that for years have drawn their water supply exclusively from wells.

Although the Water Forum succeeded in developing a framework of agreements that pulled together regional stakeholders, San Juan believed a technical document was needed to provide the participating agencies with a range of alternatives to meet future demands while honoring the commitments in the Water Forum agreement. The result, in 1998, was the American

The focus of the group was the identification of regional opportunities that could potentially provide mutual benefit to the cooperating agency and others.

River Basin Cooperating Agencies group, a constituency of Water Forum signatories that pledged financial support for completion of a Regional Water Master Plan.

The focus of the group was the identification of regional opportunities that could potentially provide mutual benefit to the cooperating agency and others.

In addition to its work with the American River Basin group, San Juan, in cooperation with the Fair Oaks Water District, Citrus Heights Water District and Orange Vale Water Company, examined opportunities for combining common services for other regional-type programs, including a regional water conservation program.

As San Juan looks to the future, its vision is that of a continuing effort to build on past successes of thinking regionally, and combining services on a regional basis when appropriate and acceptable by others. In addition, San Juan is steadfast in its commit-

ment to delivering a safe and reliable water supply to its public. Toward that end, the district was among the first water agencies in the nation to receive a federal water grant to safeguard its supply against terrorism.

150 YEARS OF WATER SERVICE

In 1854, just a few years after California gained statehood, entrepreneurs drawn to the promise of prosperity in the western frontier gathered amidst the bustling activity of the gold fields to lay the foundation of what

today is the San Juan Water District. The ensuing years have witnessed a wide array of changes, from the transition from mining to agriculture, to the wave of settlement that began after World War II. The physical characteristics of the region have also undergone changes. The early dams on the north fork of the American River, which were so often swept away by raging currents, are gone, replaced by the impressive edifice of Folsom Dam. Also relegated to the past is most of what remains of the “big ditch,” the original conveyance system that enabled miners to ex-

THE DISTRICT'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT THAT BEGAN WITH THE "BIG DITCH" LIVES ON IN THE CURRENT CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DRINKING WATER TREATMENT PLANT.



tract even more riches from the Gold Country.

But the spirit of the ditch remains, in the thousands of residential and commercial customers who receive their water through the miles of pipeline administered by the San Juan Water District. In a sense, the water provided by the North Fork Ditch Company decades ago sowed the seeds for communities that would become some of

the fastest-growing regions in the entire state. Blessed with an ample supply of water that flowed from the melting snows of the Sierra Nevada, it was no accident that Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks and Orangevale would come to resemble Midwestern farming settlements and later hubs of suburban development.

One hundred years after the originators of the North Fork Ditch Company met to launch their enterprise, residents



met again, this time arriving at the ballot box to create the San Juan district to ensure a stable, secure supply of water. Since that time, challenges and achievements have come and gone with regularity. San Juan and its long-standing partner districts in Citrus Heights, Orangevale and Fair Oaks would eventually become more integrated with neighboring agencies as all involved realized that a cooperative approach would be necessary to manage and sustain the water supply for a growing population.

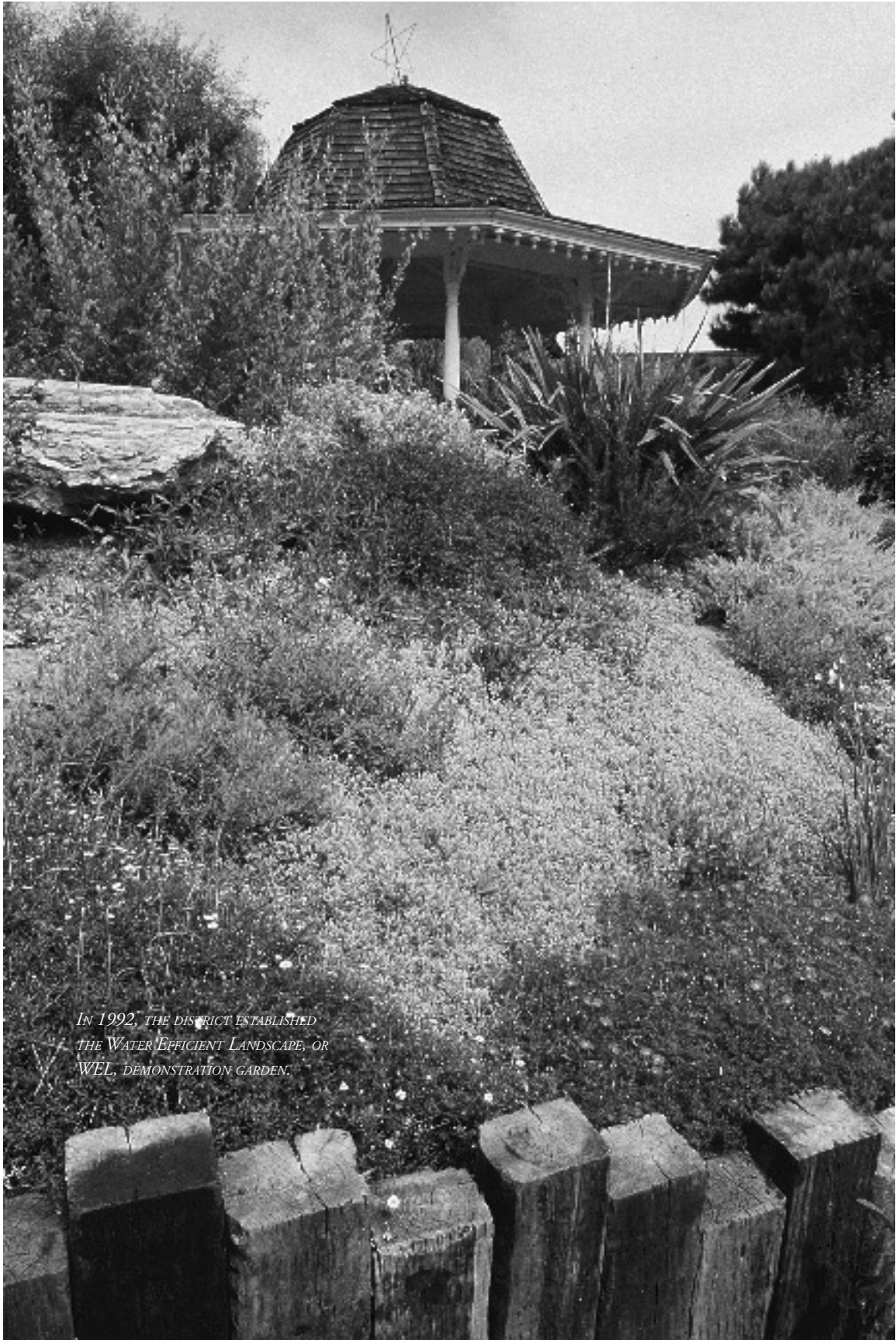
As the years have passed, the district has undertaken changes that reflect the continuing need to conserve water, ensure water quality and security of delivery and promote open space preservation. Several projects have been completed or are under way, including an upgraded treatment plant to keep San Juan in compliance with tightened federal drinking water standards, the conversion of district property into a nature preserve and efforts geared toward protecting San Juan's water against the threat of terrorism.

By 1975, state regulations prevented the storage of treated domestic water in open reservoirs. Since upgrades to

the reservoir were not economical, the district, with private funding from Elliott Homes, transformed Baldwin Reservoir, built for additional storage in 1928, into a wetlands area. In 1992, the project eventually became the Baldwin Reservoir Wetlands and Wildlife Preserve, which now serves as a haven for wildlife and native vegetation.

On the heels of the drought, the district in 1992 established its Water Efficient Landscape Garden, a demonstration project designed to assist residents in maintaining outdoor landscaping that is both attractive and easily maintained. The WEL Garden features plants that thrive in the area's warm, Mediterranean climate, as well as varieties that are resistant to fire and deer foraging. In 1999, a demonstration residential fruit orchard was added.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, heightened the nation's awareness of its potential vulnerabilities, including the susceptibility of public water systems to sabotage. In 2002, San Juan was one of the first three districts in the country to receive special security funding, completed a vulnerability assessment and implemented several

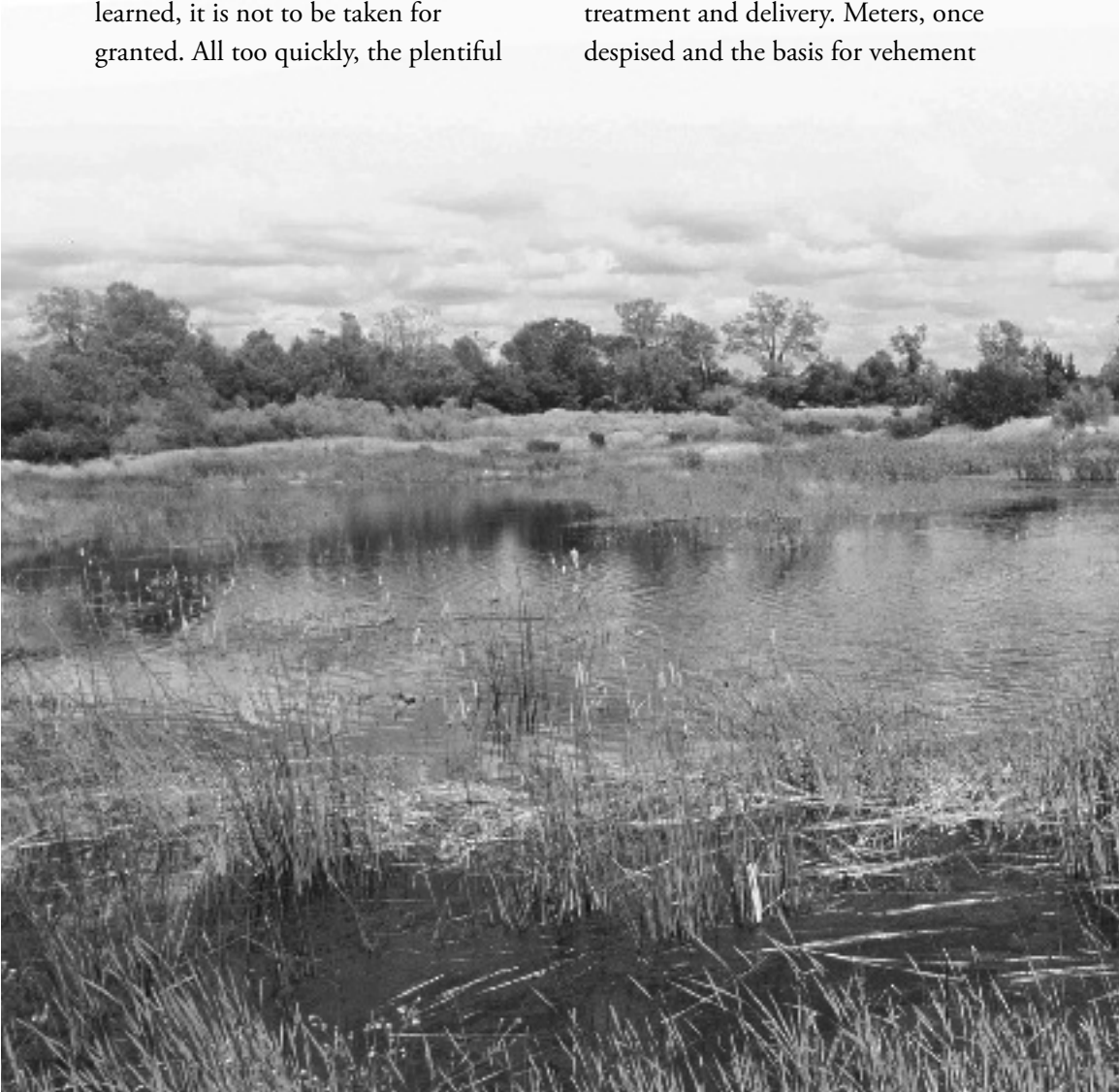


*IN 1992, THE DISTRICT ESTABLISHED
THE WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE, OR
WEL, DEMONSTRATION GARDEN.*

measures to further protect the integrity of its supply, storage and infrastructure.

What the next 150 years will bring is the subject of endless conjecture. Whatever changes may occur, the one true constant of water will remain. It is the staple of life, and as people have learned, it is not to be taken for granted. All too quickly, the plentiful

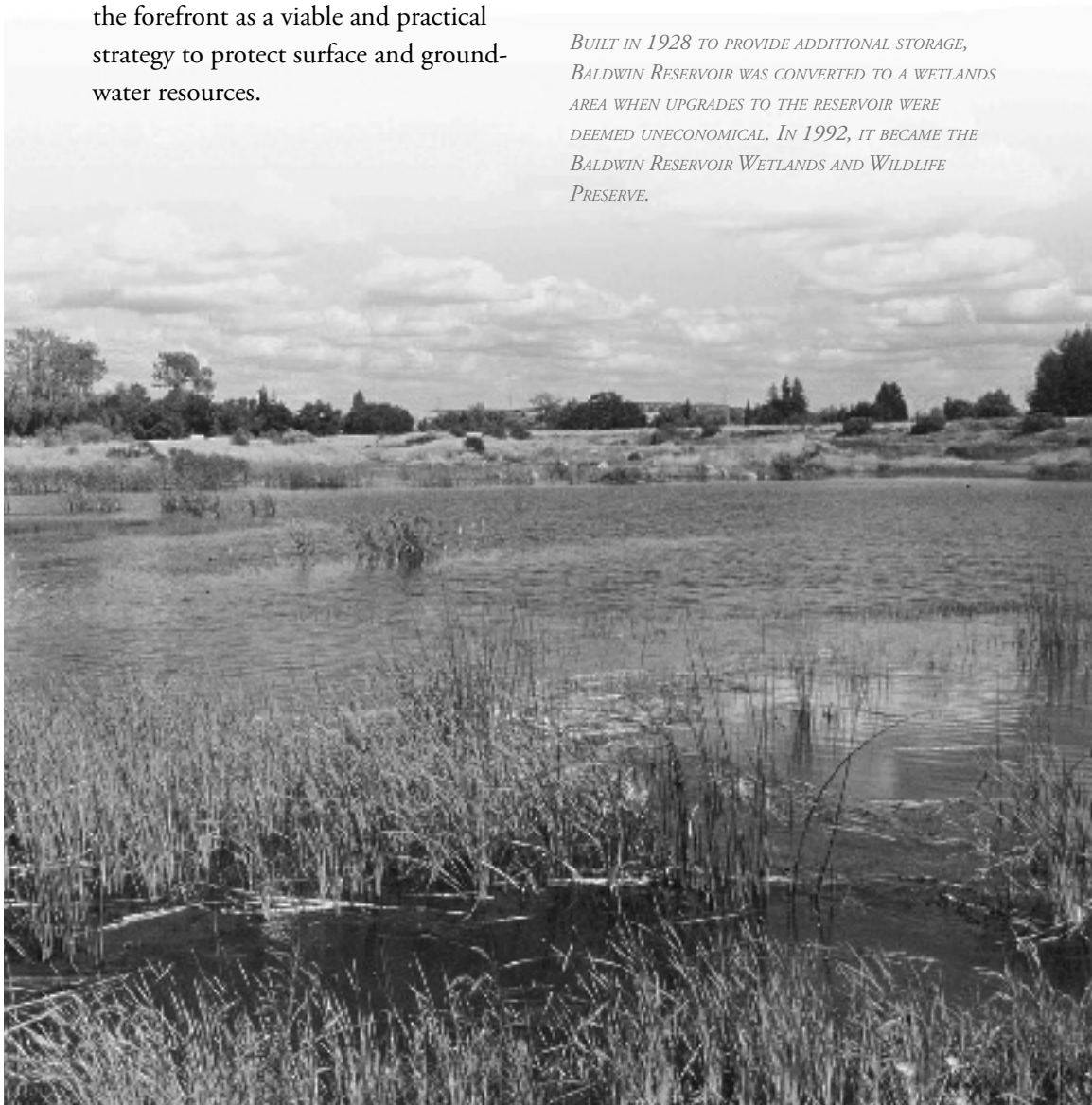
rainfall of one year can become drought. Years of struggling with serving a growing demand with a finite and sometimes declining water supply have pushed San Juan and its neighboring districts to pursue a more collaborative approach to water storage, treatment and delivery. Meters, once despised and the basis for vehement



opposition have gained acceptance as a necessary means toward achieving greater water conservation. Conjunctive use, once an obscure term known only to insiders privy to the machinations of water planning, has emerged to the forefront as a viable and practical strategy to protect surface and ground-water resources.

Throughout all that lies ahead, the San Juan Water District will continue to do as it forebears did: harness the waters of the American River for the good of all those who call the area home. ∞

BUILT IN 1928 TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL STORAGE, BALDWIN RESERVOIR WAS CONVERTED TO A WETLANDS AREA WHEN UPGRADES TO THE RESERVOIR WERE DEEMED UNECONOMICAL. IN 1992, IT BECAME THE BALDWIN RESERVOIR WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE PRESERVE.





**CITRUS
HEIGHTS
WATER
DISTRICT**

CITRUS HEIGHTS WATER DISTRICT

6230 Sylvan Road
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 725-6873
www.chwd.org



FOLSOM
California

CITY OF FOLSOM

50 Natoma Street
Folsom, CA 95630-2696
(916) 355-7200
www.folsom.ca.us





FAIR OAKS
WATER DISTRICT

FAIR OAKS WATER DISTRICT
10317 Fair Oaks Boulevard
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 967-5723
www.fowd.com



ORANGE VALE WATER COMPANY
9031 Central Ave
Orangevale, CA 95662
(916) 988-1693





SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SINCE 1954

Howard C. Greenhalgh

February 1954 – March 1968

William C. Pettite

August 1968 – February 1972

Pedro Campoy

February 1954 – April 1962

Warren L. Desimone

December 1969 – July 1971

George E. Johnson

February 1954 – April 1962

Dr. J. Irvine Bingham

July 1971 – November 1973

Sidney N. Peterson

February 1954 – February 1976

Richard S. Bacon

July 1971 – April 1975

John H. Jardine

February 1954 – April 1964

Mark E. Verke

August 1971 – November 1998

Thomas C. Tomich

April 1962 – November 1969

Ronald H. Greenwood

March 1972 – October 1972

Norman B. Hunter

April 1964 – July 1971

William Sherwood

December 1972 – November 1977

Ben L. McIntyre

April 1969 – July 1971

Robert R. Sullivan

November 1973 – November 1990



SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SINCE 1954

Dr. Kenneth E. Overholt

August 1975 – May 1982

Robert R. Sullivan

April 1991 – November 1992

Albert Ricksecker

March 1976 – November 1988

Kenneth H. Miller

December 1992 – present

Kenneth H. Miller

January 1976 – November 1985

Edward J. “Ted” Costa

December 1994 – present

Clois W. Snyder, Jr.

July 1982 – March 1991

Glenn A. Miller

December 1996 – March 2003

Glenn A. Miller

December 1985 – December 1990

Lyle A. Hoag

January 1999 – December 2003

Kathryn M. Mathews

December 1988 – November 1996

Joe Alessandri

April 2003 – present

Dorothy Kilgore

December 1990 – present

David A. Peterson

February 2004 – present

G.B. “Ben” Uggla

December 1990 – July 1994

CHRONOLOGY

- 1847 California's population estimated at 7,000.
- 1848 James Marshall discovers gold at John Sutter's sawmill near Coloma along the south fork of the American River.
- 1849 The Gold Rush begins as tens of thousands flock to California from around the world in search of instant riches. San Francisco's population grows from 600 to 25,000 in one year.
- 1850 On September 9, California becomes the 31st state; its population is 165,000. Over the next few years, gold panning and wooden sluice boxes give way to a new practice known as hydraulic mining in which miners aim canvas hoses at the earth, washing away thick layers of soil and rock to expose the gold. The resulting debris, known as "slickens," chokes rivers and streams, contributing to downstream flooding.
- 1853 Survey parties travel up the American River looking for a place to build a diversion canal to bring water to gold mining sites along the river's north fork.
- 1854 On July 27, the North Fork American River and Mining Company is founded, subsequently changing its name to the American River Water and Mining Company. This is the predecessor of the San Juan Water District. On September 18, workers begin building a canal on the American River to bring water to the burgeoning mining camps. On November 27, the American River Water and Mining Company incorporates and claims 3,000 miner's inches of water (27,000 gallons per minute). Because of the Gold Rush, California's population reaches 300,000.
- 1856 The 33-mile canal, known as "the big ditch," reaches Mississippi Bar, just above Fair Oaks. The canal is completed at a cost of \$180,000, or \$3.6 million in today's dollars.
- 1862 The "Great Calamity" flood causes widespread flooding throughout the state and destroys the American River Water and Mining Company's dam and one mile of flume. The dam is rebuilt one mile downstream.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1867 On Christmas Day, another flood washes out the American River Water and Mining Company's dam and part of the canal, and the constant cycle of damage and repair prohibits the company from making a profit.
- 1870 On March 21, all interests of the American River Water and Mining Company are sold to George Reamer for \$10,000. Reamer begins construction of what will be known as Reamer Dam. For two years, mild winters spare the dam, enabling Reamer to raise the dam and improve the canal.
- 1873 Cattle magnate Crawford W. Clarke purchases the property that is now Fair Oaks but does not develop the land or attach any water rights.
- 1874-75 A series of floods carries away the Reamer Dam and Reamer is unable to finance construction of a new dam. Reamer subsequently sells the American River Water and Mining Company to Fred Birdsall for \$42,000 on April 19, 1875.
- 1880 Birdsall builds a new dam below the Reamer site, using cedar timbers and reinforced steel rods. The Birdsall Dam's cost is \$14,000.
- 1884 The federal Circuit Court decision in *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield*, requires termination of hydraulic mining debris discharges into California rivers.
- 1887 The Irrigation District Law, commonly referred to as the Wright Act, is passed, permitting formation of irrigation districts. On March 1, Clarke purchases the American River Water and Mining Company from Birdsall and changes the name to the C.W. Clarke Water Company. Clarke constructs a 35-acre reservoir one-half mile northeast of Oak and Santa Juanita avenues in Orange Vale.
- 1889 The Orange Vale Colonization Company forms to begin the process of dividing 20,000 acres of property within the Rancho del San Juan and Rancho Del Paso land grants. The Company signs a 10-year contract with the C.W. Clarke Water Company on May 16 to receive guaranteed rights for future water needs.
- 1892 Conservationist John Muir founds the Sierra Club.
- 1893 Congress creates the California Debris Commission, a federal regulatory agency to enforce restrictions against hydraulic mining.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1899 Clarke incorporates the American River Water and Mining Company as the North Fork Ditch Company.
- 1900 California population reaches 1.5 million.
- 1902 The North Fork Ditch Company purchases 15.4 acres of land to build a regulatory reservoir north of what is now the entrance to Folsom Dam on Auburn-Folsom Road. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) is established through the U.S. Reclamation Act.
- 1909 The American Canon Water Company buys the North Fork Ditch Company.
- 1911 Citrus Heights is founded.
- 1913 The California Water District Law authorizes the formation of water districts throughout the state.
- 1914 Ownership of the American Canon Water Company reverts to the North Fork Ditch Company.
- 1917 Federal governmental officials approve the Sacramento Valley flood control bypass system. On March 16, the Fair Oaks Irrigation District begins operation.
- 1920 California population reaches 3.4 million. The Citrus Heights Irrigation District is established for the purposes of supplying water to 225 farms on 3,157 acres. On July 16, a committee of the water districts supplied by the North Fork Ditch Company reports that it would be advantageous for the combined public entities to explore purchase of the company. But no action is taken.
- 1925 An assessment of the North Fork Ditch Company's system estimates a major loss of water by seepage through the unlined ditch and leaky wooden pipes, prompting a \$500,000 renovation project in which 35,000 feet of reinforced ditch linings and metal flumes are built.
- 1928 California's Constitution is amended to require that all water use be "reasonable and beneficial."
- 1930 California population reaches 5.6 million.
- 1933 The Central Valley Project (CVP) Act is passed.
- 1937 The Rivers and Harbors Act authorizes construction of the initial features of the CVP by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

CHRONOLOGY

- 1940 The Fair Oaks Irrigation District drills its first groundwater well.
- 1944 The Flood Control Act authorizes the Corps to build a dam (Folsom Dam) on the lower American River.
- 1947 Directors of the Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks and Orange Vale water agencies organize an informal committee to study the present and future water needs of the region. Acquisition of the North Fork Ditch Company is considered as a means to ensure a reliable, long-term supply of water, given the impending creation of Folsom reservoir. But the committee disbands in 1949 without taking action.
- 1948 Work begins on Folsom Dam.
- 1949 President Harry S Truman signs the Engle Act into law, which specifies construction of a 1 million acre-feet reservoir for Folsom Dam, and that the facility is to be operated and maintained by the Bureau.
- 1950 California population reaches 11 million.
- 1951 As Folsom Dam takes shape, representatives of the Bureau and North Fork Ditch Company discuss the continuance of water service.
- 1952 On March 20, a Bureau memorandum confirms North Fork's right to divert 33,000 acre-feet from the American River at a maximum rate of 75 cubic feet per second, about 34,000 gallons per minute.
- 1953 A committee of member water districts concludes that acquisition of the North Fork Ditch Company is a first step toward achieving an adequate and dependable water supply.
- 1954 On February 10, nearly two-thirds of area voters approve formation of the San Juan Suburban Water District. The district is named San Juan after the Spanish land grant of Rancho del San Juan that comprised the area in the 18th and 19th centuries. On April 12, the North Fork Ditch Company and the federal government enter into an agreement that formally acknowledges North Fork's water right, and provides that the government will build conveyance facilities to deliver the guaranteed water from Folsom Lake to a new storage reservoir. In December, the San Juan Suburban Water District purchases the North Fork Ditch Company to increase control over the area water supply.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1955 A major flood in the Sacramento Valley kills 38 people. The partially completed Folsom Dam helps save the city of Sacramento.
- 1956 On May 5, a major dedication ceremony and celebration marks Folsom Dam's completion.
- 1957 Water begins to flow from Folsom Lake to the San Juan Suburban Water District's Hinkle Reservoir.
- 1960 California population reaches 16 million.
- 1962 The last "clam shell" gold dredge on the American River ceases operation. Sacramento County establishes the American River Parkway bike path and recreational corridor, which runs from Folsom Dam to Discovery Park.
- 1967 Construction begins on Auburn Dam.
- 1968 Congress passes the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- 1969 Congress passes the National Environmental Quality Act.
- 1970 California population reaches 20 million. The California Legislature passes the California Environmental Quality Act and California Endangered Species Act. The first Earth Day is held on April 22.
- 1972 Congress passes the federal Clean Water Act.
- 1973 San Juan Suburban Water District voters approve a \$4.2 million bond to build a new, state-of-the-art water treatment system plant to comply with stricter federal and state health standards. The plant replaces more than two miles of open and unlined ditches left over from the North Fork Ditch Company era.
- 1974 Congress passes the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- 1975 Construction on Auburn Dam is suspended for seismic investigations.
- 1976-1977 California suffers a severe drought.
- 1979 The Fair Oaks Irrigation District changes its name to Fair Oaks Water District in recognition that homes have all but replaced the farmland.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1980 California population reaches 24 million.
- 1986 Severe flooding nearly tops levees in Sacramento.
- 1987-1992 California suffers through a severe six-year drought.
- 1992 Congress approves landmark CVP Improvement Act, requiring all water agencies receiving federal water – including San Juan Suburban Water District and its wholesale water agencies – to install water meters on customer accounts. The district establishes the Water Efficient Landscaping – WEL – demonstration garden.
- 1993 Officials with the city and county of Sacramento establish a regional effort, known as the Water Forum, to develop a long-term vision for water through 2030.
- 1994 San Juan Suburban Water District becomes the San Juan Water District.
- 1997 New Year's storms cause state's second most devastating flood of the century.
- 2000 California population reaches 34 million. Forty Sacramento region water purveyors, public officials, community group leaders, environmentalists, and business representatives sign the Water Forum Agreement, a plan to provide reliable water supplies and preserve the environment of the lower American River. Signatories include the San Juan Water District and its member agencies.
- 2004 The San Juan Water District celebrates its 150th Anniversary with a special May 22 celebration.



**SAN JUAN WATER DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 2157
9935 AUBURN FOLSOM ROAD
GRANITE BAY, CALIFORNIA 95746**

**916-791-0115
916-969-2279**