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HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

FINAL REPORT

Alan M. Paterson
Rand F. Herbert
Stephen R. Wee

Prepared for the State Lands Commission
pursuant to Contract LC-7746

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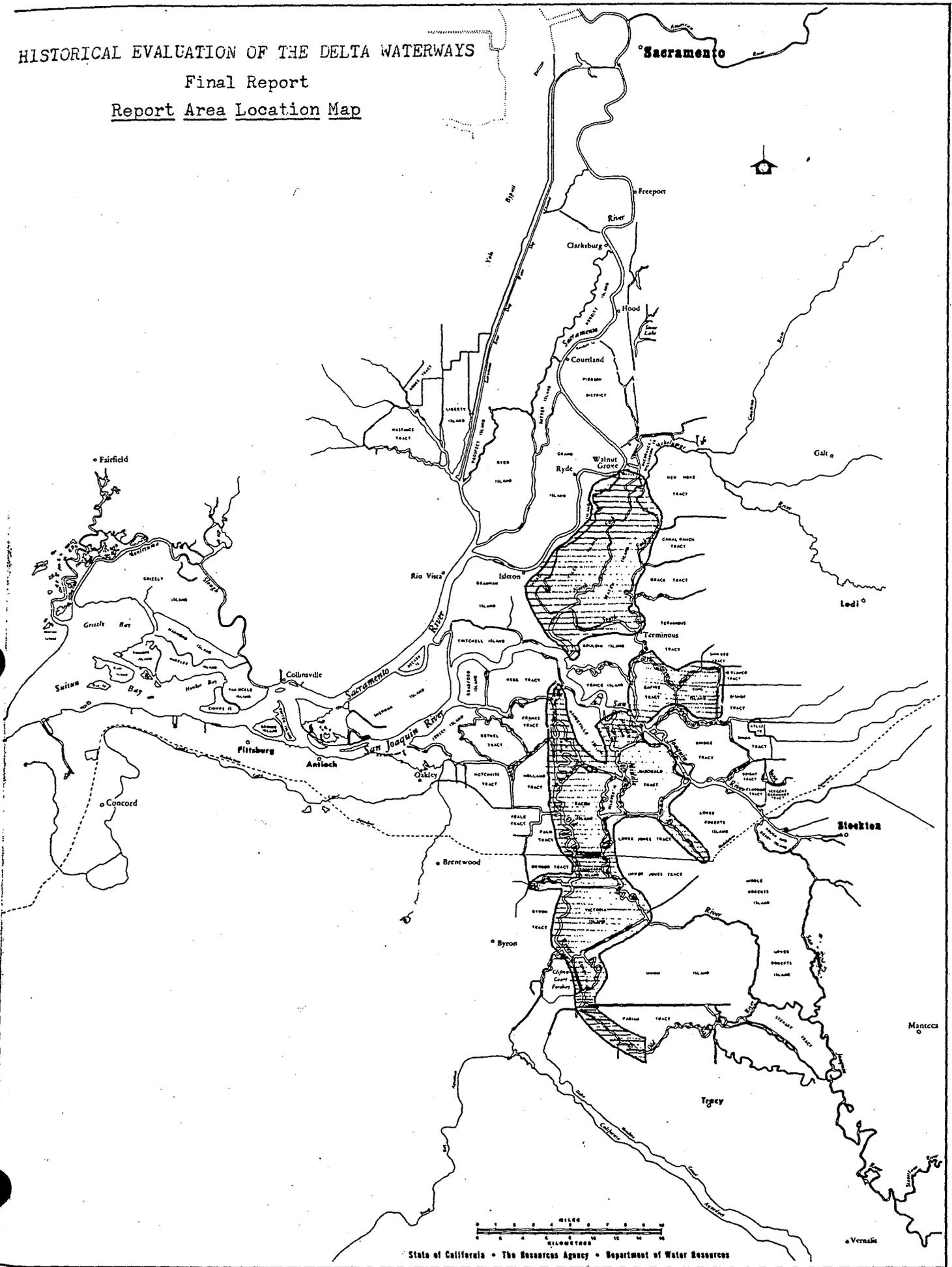
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Final Report

Report Area Location Map



State of California • The Resources Agency • Department of Water Resources

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INTRODUCTION

The California State Lands Commission received a grant from the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, to remove navigation hazards from portions of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta using a mobile crane mounted on a barge. Many of the objects to be removed were natural, such as trees and snags in the waterways. However, in the case of man-made objects scheduled for removal, the terms of the Federal grant required a historical analysis to determine whether or not the object(s) should, in fact, be removed. Those objects or sites found to have important historic values were to be identified and left undisturbed by the hazard removal operation. "Historic value" was defined in terms of a site's potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Recommendations regarding the historic significance and proposed removal of man-made objects were subject to review and approval by the State Office of Historic Preservation.

In February 1978, the State Lands Commission awarded a contract for historic evaluation work in connection with the hazard removal project to Alan M. Peterson of Davis, California, in association with subcontractors Rand F. Herbert and Stephen R. Wee. Work commenced following final contract approval in April, 1978, with the first of six reports on specific sites and objects submitted in May, 1978, along with a summary overview of Delta history. Research and preparation of additional reports continued through October, 1978, when the last of the "site specific" reports was submitted to the State Lands Commission.

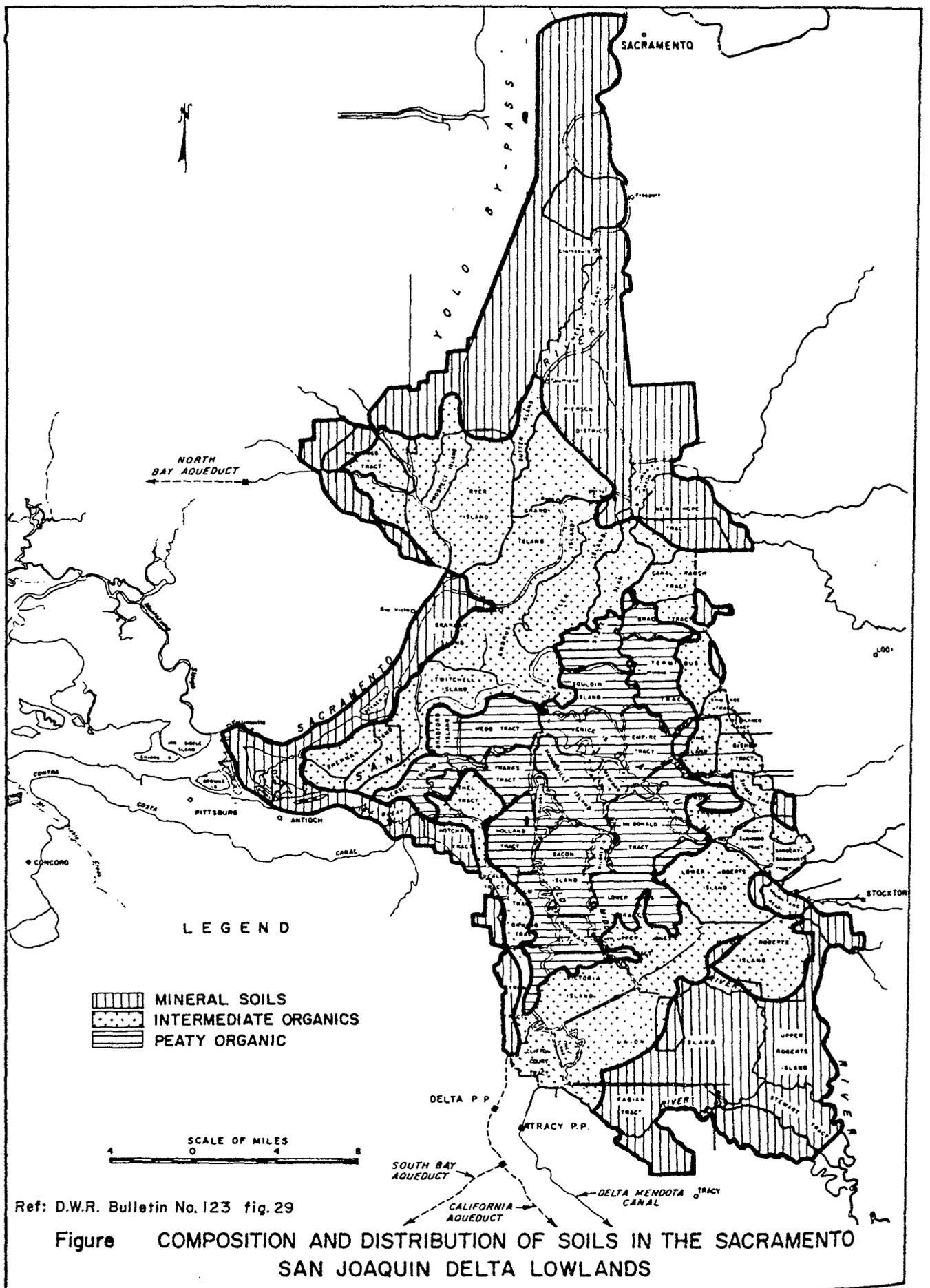
The primary goal of the research effort was, of course, the identification and evaluation of man-made objects designated by the State Lands Commission as subject to removal. The first step in that procedure was on-site inspection of the waterways and objects involved in company of a State Lands Commission Land Agent, and the photographing of those objects. Inspection cruises were carried out on boats chartered by the State Lands Commission or on Sheriff's Patrol boats from San Joaquin and Contra Costa counties.

Following the examination of the waterways and the preparation of maps showing site locations, the task of documentary research began. A wide variety of sources were used in an effort to identify each site and trace its history. The research was performed in various places including the libraries of the University of California, Berkeley, Davis and Los Angeles campuses, the University of the Pacific, the University of Southern California, the Bancroft Library and the Water Resources Center Archives, both in Berkeley, the Huntington Library in San Marino, the State Library and State Archives in Sacramento and public libraries in Stockton and Walnut Grove. Museum collections were utilized including those of the Pioneer Museum and Haggin Gallery in Stockton and the San Francisco Maritime Museum. Collections at the California Historical Society, the Society of California Pioneers, The San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum and the Contra Costa County Historical Society were used as were the archives of the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, whose former officers figured prominently in Delta reclamation. Government document collections were among our most valuable resources. County Assessor records and plat maps, minutes of the Board of Supervisors, road reports, and other local documents were useful, as were maps and documents maintained by the State Lands Commission. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, was helpful in providing information on waterway structures licensed by the Corps and in supplying numerous old maps and plans. Records available at the United States Geologic Survey Office in Menlo Park and the Federal Record Center in San Bruno were researched. These and other documentary sources were at the heart of the research project but not all sites proved to be documented. The identification of undocumented sites was materially assisted by the recollections of long-time Delta residents like Leo Fallman (former island superintendent), Tony Busalacci (fish buyer and mailboat operator), Bud Christiansen (tugboat pilot), Wilton Colberg (boat builder), Wallace McCormack (President of the Bank of Rio Vista), and John J. McIntosh (former accountant for California Delta Farms and the last president of Productive Properties, Ltd.). Leonard Covello of Stockton made available his extensive archive of historic photographs. Whatever success this project has enjoyed owes a great deal to all the people who have assisted us and we would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation for their help. Following research, reports were written in which each site was described as it appears today, its history was outlined and an evaluation of its historical values and National Register potential was made.

Throughout the research effort our goal was not only to identify the specific sites but to understand the basic history of the islands adjacent to those sites in order that a satisfactory perspective would be maintained and each site's importance clearly understood. Thus each of the six reports dealing with specific sites and waterways included a section on the land ownership and reclamation history of the report area and sections on agriculture and transportation.

Research into the history of Delta reclamation on specific islands yielded some interesting results that extend beyond the strict definition of our task of historical identification and evaluation of designated sites. What has emerged is a fascinating tale of financial and corporate development that has not been emphasized by most historians even though it is of central importance to an understanding of Delta history. We have used the opportunity of this final report to summarize these general findings. In preparing the following historical narrative, we do not intend to duplicate all of the specific information in the six previous reports and the overview, but to develop themes in Delta development that have emerged in the course of our research. It is our hope that this summary narrative will be useful to those interested in the history of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta both in and out of government.

We have also prepared a brief summary of the historic resources of the study area and a list of the most interesting sites or objects encountered during the project. This material follows the historical narrative.



PATTERNS OF RECLAMATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE
SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA

I. The Influence of the Environment

Several important physical features set the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta apart from the rest of California's Central Valley Basin; the low elevation of the land, the influence of ocean tides on water levels, and the area's "unique soils" (SWRCB, Draft EIR, III-1). All of these distinctive features are related to one another. The low elevation (five feet or less above sea level in the lowland Delta) helps make the Delta an estuarine environment; a place where the rivers meet the tides. The lowlands in their natural state were subject to periodic flooding, sometimes at high tide and in other places when the rivers overflowed their low banks from winter and spring runoff. The frequent inundation of vast areas of the Delta, in turn, affected soil composition. Hydrophytic, or marsh, plants like tules and reeds died and decomposed over a period of at least 10,000 years to form an organic soil known as peat. As might be expected, the peat soil zone corresponded to the lowest regions of the Delta, giving way to intermediate organic soils (twenty percent or less organic material) on slightly higher lands. Mineral soils occupy the still higher margins of the Delta. The accompanying map showing soil distribution in the Delta reveals a region of intermediate organic soil penetrating southwestward to Sherman and Twitchell Islands, even though the area closer to the river junction might seem a logical place for peat soils. The Sacramento River, however, carried sufficient sediment to build low natural levees and modify the soil composition along its course.

The physical facts of elevation, soil composition and tidal influence in water levels are of fundamental historic importance. The reclamation pattern in large measure reflected the soil pattern, with areas of mineral and intermediate organic soils being successfully reclaimed before the central core of peat soils. The reasons involve the relatively higher elevations of many of these lands and the fact that mineral soils make far better levees than do peat soils. Among the easiest lands to reclaim were some of those in close proximity to the Sacramento River where physical factors of elevation and soil were combined with convenient river transportation. Throughout the Delta reclamation began by following the patterns of the land, and succeeded in creating a substantially different, man-made environment.

II. Reclamation: Organized and Unorganized, 1850-1868

Swamp and overflowed lands in California were granted by Congress to the new state in 1850 in legislation known as the Arkansas Act. The Act provided for the donation of those less

valuable lands with the stipulation that proceeds from their sale would be used to reclaim them. Although the State moved slowly to formalize procedures for the purchase of the swamp and overflowed lands, settlers began occupying the more accessible riverfront lands. Reuben Kercheval arrived at Grand Island in 1850 and by 1852 both Andrus and Tyler islands had settlers. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 94, 19; USBR, Report DL-5, 6). Low levees were begun by 1853 on Grand Island (S.E.D. Notes, No. 94, 19), and on Andrus Island by 1855 although these early attempts were generally unsuccessful. (USBR, Report DL-5, 6). At the southern end of the Delta, Union Island's first levees were erected by John Petty in 1857. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 1). In 1855 the State Legislature enacted a law for the sale of swamp lands at \$1.00 an acre with a maximum of 320 acres per individual, though in 1859 the acreage limit was raised to 640 acres. Land sales increased following the enactment of the higher acreage limit and in the early 1860's considerable land passed into private ownership in tracts of approximately 640 acres.

With islands or tracts divided between small owners, levee construction, when it was attempted, was generally haphazard. Even a substantial landowner like John Petty of Union Island admitted, "There was no particular system to my work, I had to do it just as I could and when I felt able." (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 1). If allowed to continue such lack of coordination in reclamation might have guaranteed that virtually no permanent reclamation would take place. In 1861 the California legislature, responsible under the Arkansas Act for putting money from swamp and overflowed land sales into reclamation, decreed the formation of a Board of Swamp Land Commissioners to oversee the organization of local districts and the expenditure of swamp land funds to reclaim those districts. Procedures for setting up a district were outlined with the stipulation that the district had to be susceptible to a single mode or plan of reclamation. In practice, that meant that district boundaries had to reflect the physical realities of the environment so that reclamation was actually possible. Districts, therefore, generally included all of an island or portions that could reasonably be reclaimed separately. Engineers were appointed to plan reclamation work and soon improved levees were built and minor sloughs dammed.

In the study area, the greatest activity in this period was in the north. Landowners on Andrus and Tyler islands were quick to form swamp land districts. Swamp Land District No. 8 on Andrus Island closed several sloughs and erected some miles of levee, although the flood of 1862 did considerable damage to the works. Tyler Island residents organized District No. 4 and by 1870, saw their levees rise to a three-foot height on the northern end of the island where the basic elevation of the land was higher. (USBR, Report DL-5, 5). Staten Island's Swamp Land District No. 38, formed in 1864, enjoyed the distinction of being among the longest lasting of any of the early districts, continuing to the

present day to maintain the island's levees. Bouldin Island had a district, No. 22, organized in 1861, but little was apparently accomplished. On New Hope and Brack tracts east of the Mokelumne River, Swamp Land District No. 5 was organized and began an ambitious by-pass canal to route Mokelumne River floodwaters through Beaver Slough to the South Fork of the river below the district. Although the canal was reported nearly completed in 1865, nothing further was heard of the plan. (DWR, Bulletin No. 37, 116). In January, 1865, Swamp Land District No. 46 was formed in the area later known as Terminous Tract, and later in that year its entire reclamation system was under contract, including ten miles of levee, five dams to cut off small sloughs and fourteen tide and flood gates. (DWR, Bulletin No. 37, 118). The district was owned entirely by R. C. Sargent, the leading reclaimer on the Mokelumne River mainland tracts. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 90, n.p.). Lands in the report area to the south of the main channel of the San Joaquin River were little affected by the work of the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners, although steps may have been taken for district organization without any subsequent work.

Although the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners and the organization of swamp land districts seemed promising, and in fact essential if landowners were going to work together on effective reclamation, the system was short-lived. Reclamation was proving far more expensive than had been optimistically assumed and State funds were inadequate to complete effective levees. Landowners could, by mechanisms available through the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners, tax themselves for further improvements but that alternative could prove less palatable to some landowners than the collection of money from the State's swamp land fund derived from swamp land sales. For reasons not altogether clear, the State abolished the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners in 1866, transferring responsibility for district organization and payments from swamp land funds to the counties' Boards of Supervisors. County administration was generally lax and at times chaotic. Whereas the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners had required the districts formed under its jurisdiction to have boundaries corresponding to a reasonable plan for reclamation, the supervisors tended to approve any district proposed to them, whether or not it stood any chance of successful reclamation. In some instances districts were formed encompassing only a single property owner for the sole purpose of exempting the property from other districts to avoid payment of reclamation assessments, and district boundaries often overlapped.

Thus hundreds of districts were organized during the ensuing years without system, fixed policy or regard to the feasibility of the project . . . great numbers were organized to merely qualify before a complacent Board of Supervisors for the collection of a per acre allowance for completed reclamation from the swamp land fund. This qualification was often accomplished by the simple expedient of throwing a single furrow around the designated boundaries. (DWR, Bulletin No. 37, 118-119).

Although some Swamp Land Districts established by 1865 survived, the demise of effective reclamation district organization left a vacuum in Delta reclamation. Small landowners, if they could not organize functional districts, stood little chance of coordinating individual levee systems well enough to bring about complete reclamation. Also reclamation was a costly undertaking if the levees were to do any more than just keep out ordinary high tides. The failure of semi-public organizations left reclamation largely in private hands and the abolition of the 640-acre limit in 1868 opened the door to the entry of large financiers and speculators into reclamation. By the late 1860's, it had become plain to most observers that for reclamation to succeed, whole tracts would have to be reclaimed at once rather than piecemeal and that such a practice would require vast sums of money. What districts had been unable to accomplish in their short effective careers would now be attempted by entrepreneurs.

III. Large-Scale Reclamation Begun: 1868-1895

George D. Roberts came to California from Ohio in 1850. He prospered in the Nevada City quartz mines and soon sought additional means of increasing his fortune. Like most west coast capitalists of the day, Roberts invested in the Comstock silver mines, and, perhaps in association with B. F. Mauldin, in Delta real estate. In 1868, he began buying swamp lands in the Delta, accumulating, at one time, a quarter of a million acres. (Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 441). In 1869, he formed the Tide Land Reclamation Company with a capitalization of \$12 million and control of 120,000 acres in the Delta. (Articles of Incorporation, Tide Land Reclamation Company). The company included many of the leading financial investors of the time, including Judge Solomon Heydenfeldt, Lloyd Tevis and James B. Haggin. Their purpose was plain enough -- buy lands cheaply, reclaim them and sell them at a profit. Roberts paid from 50 cents to three dollars per acre plus a dollar to the State, but estimated reclamation on a large tract to cost six or seven dollars per acre and up to \$25 per acre on Grand Island. The reclaimed lands, however, were worth up to \$75 per acre, leaving a tidy profit for Roberts and his partners. (Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 441). The Tide Land Reclamation Company reclaimed Twitchell and Grand islands and in 1871 leveed Brannan Island and adjacent Andrus Island, selling the Andrus Island land for \$25 per acre. (Sacramento Union, April 12, 1873). In 1870, the well publicized reclamation of Roberts Island was begun under the direction of Captain W. C. Walker but was not completed. On Union Island, work was not reported until 1876 when exterior levees were built. One section constructed with horse-drawn scrapers cost about \$7,100 per mile and had a height of nine feet. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 2).

Tide Land Reclamation Company levees were built primarily by Chinese labor on a contract basis, using hand tools. Any machinery involved in the construction process was operated by white men.

In questioning before a Legislative Committee investigating the problems of Chinese immigration, Roberts expressed the opinion that the Chinese were good workers and that without their efforts reclamation could be virtually impossible in the Delta. (Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 436-441). Roberts also attempted to use early dredgers but the machines were inadequate and their levees proved inferior to those built by the Chinese or with horse scrapers.

George D. Roberts' financial affairs and those of the Tide Land Reclamation Company were nothing if not complex. Further study of Roberts' operations in tule land development has raised more questions than have been answered. Roberts' investments in real estate and mining ventures in the West involved various associates of William C. Ralston, the financial kingpin of California in the 1870's, including Asbury Harpending. Harpending was a speculator of some prominence in an era of speculators and was in some now obscure manner associated with Roberts in his tide land investments. In 1871, Harpending was in London and may have been trying to sell Roberts Island and Union Island, both owned by the Tide Land Reclamation Company, to British investors. (George D. Roberts to Asbury Harpending, November 29, 1871, December 4, 1871, March 18, 1872). At the same time, Harpending and Roberts, along with Ralston and such luminaries as David D. Colton of the Southern Pacific, General George B. McClellan, S.L.M. Barlow and Baron Rothschild, were involved in a bizarre episode known as the Great Diamond Hoax. Roberts was perhaps the first to be taken in by the two swindlers who salted a diamond field in northwestern Colorado and induced some of the West's most solid capitalists to invest in it. The fraud was revealed in late 1872 with Roberts, Harpending, Ralston and other having lost substantial sums. (Harpending, 138-195). Roberts' letters reveal that the diamond hoax only aggravated his already shakey financial position. Harpending was so disgusted with finance after the affair that he temporarily retired and sold off his properties. In that connection, he says, "I sold a great acreage of tule land to George D. Roberts, part of which comprises what is known as Roberts Island, not far from the City of Stockton." (Harpending, 193). The sale may have been of an interest in those lands for Harpending apparently never owned them outright. His statement raises some interesting questions regarding the actual ownership and management of the Tide Land Reclamation Company that have not been addressed by previous scholars.

Roberts' letters to Harpending indicate that he often operated on the verge of bankruptcy. In a letter written in the summer of 1872, during the diamond excitement, he says, "I owe Lent-Latham-Fry and Ralston, in the aggregate near 200,000 - which is the bulk of my indebtedness. I have settled with Haggin and Ruse. They pressed me. I made fearful sacrifices, but finally settled everything up satisfactorily." (George D. Roberts to Asbury

Harpending, July 4, 1872). Roberts needed to locate a purchaser for his tidelands if he was to remain solvent, so in the mid-1870's he began a complicated series of dealings with Thomas Hansford Williams, an attorney who had made a fortune on the Comstock Lode. In 1876, the Tide Land Reclamation Company began selling off major properties, including Union and Roberts islands. Williams and his partner, David Bixler, purchased Union Island, and the Stockton Independent of June 6, 1876, reported that Williams had "bought all the right, title and interest of George D. Roberts in the swamp and overflowed lands in this (San Joaquin) and adjacent counties and proposes entering into the reclamation of the lands on an extensive scale." Just what property changed hands is unclear, but the appearance of Williams' and Bixler's names on plat maps in 1877 on lands belonging previously to the reclamation company indicates that most, if not all, of Roberts' and the Tide Land Reclamation Company's holdings were in new ownership. Whether or not it had any land, the Tide Land Reclamation Company still existed on paper and in 1879 Roberts deeded the stock in that concern to Williams and Bixler in settlement of a debt of over \$600,000. (Irwin, 13).

The legal tangle of stocks and lands should not be allowed to obscure the fundamental point of the Tide Land Reclamation Company's brief career. It brought large-scale capital and organization to the business of reclamation. Its levees usually had to be rebuilt at a later date but it did initiate the reclamation of several large tracts and in a sense proved the possibility of doing so. The Tide Land Reclamation Company was a gamble, a speculation. Roberts was asked by a Legislative Committee about the risks.

"You encounter great risks in reclaiming these lands, do you not, from floods?"

"Yes sir; it was an experiment when we started in. Very few capitalists would touch it at all. It is still looked on now as very hazardous."

(Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 441).

Hazardous as swamp land reclamation may have been as an investment, Roberts' example drew other capitalists into the risks of reclamation. T. H. Williams entered the Delta in connection with George D. Roberts and became one of the area's major landowners. Williams came to California in 1850 and immediately tried his hand at gold mining. That occupation proved unprofitable and did a brief fling at ranching. Trained as a lawyer, Williams soon began practicing that profession and prospered. In 1859, he was elected to a two-year term as California's Attorney General. He left California for Virginia City, Nevada, in 1863 to try his luck as a lawyer on the Comstock Lode. In partnership with David Bixler, Williams engaged in a

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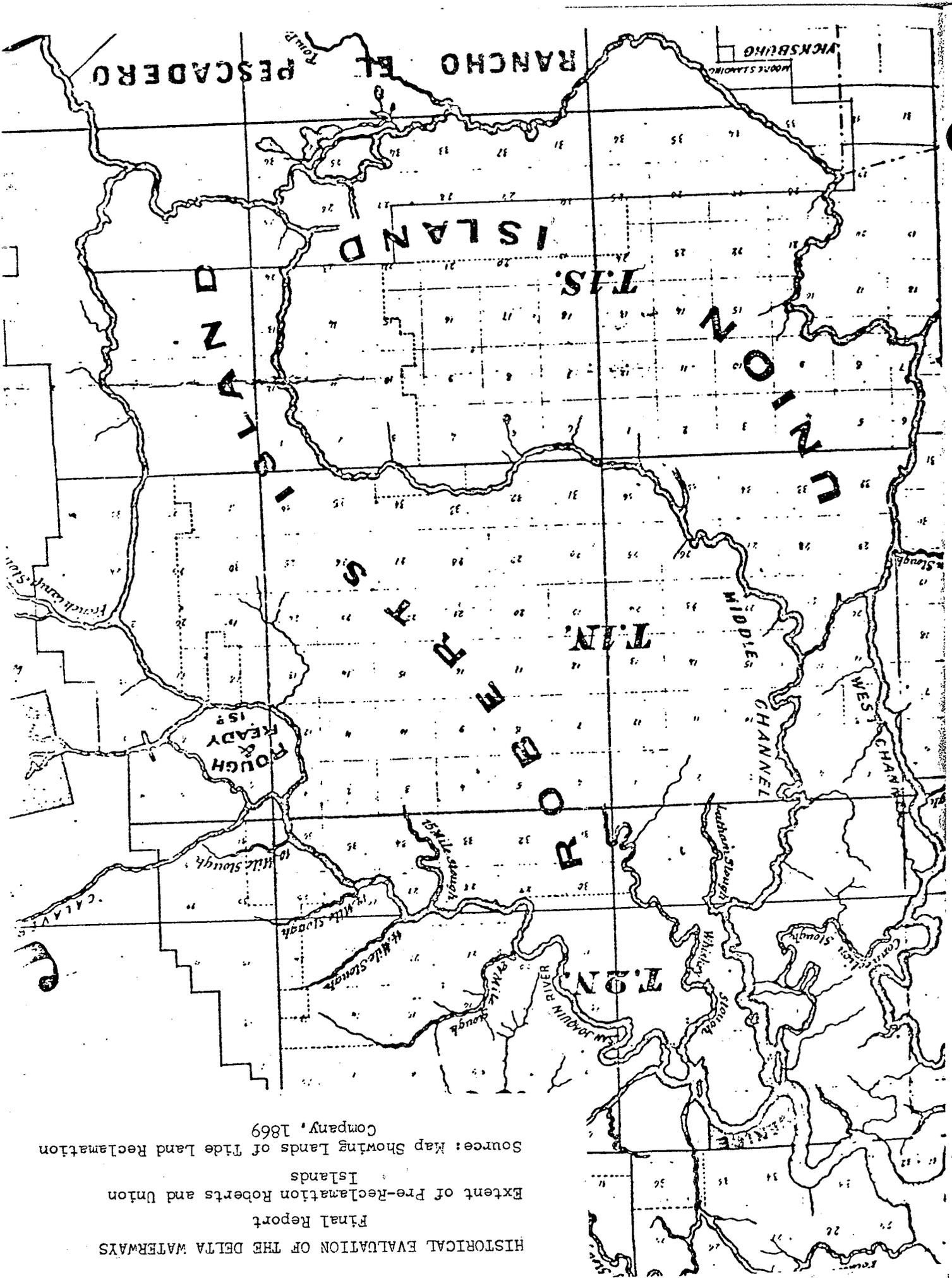
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Extent of Pre-Reclamation Roberts and Union

Islands

Source: Map Showing Lands of Tide Land Reclamation

Company, 1869



series of complicated lawsuits common in the mining regions. One result was the acquisition by Williams and Bixler of the Central No. 2 Mining Claim in 1871, in payment for legal services. The mine was generally considered worthless, but it turned out to be astride the lode known as the Big Bonanza of the 1870's. Williams and Bixler made several million dollars on the mine and Williams even tried to be elected U. S. Senator from Nevada. After his defeat for that office by William Sharon, he and Bixler left Nevada and returned to California. ("Biography of T. H. Williams." n.p.; Irwin, 9-10).

While Bixler departed for a two-year honeymoon in Europe, Williams began investing their fortune in Delta land. Although Williams and Bixler acquired numerous properties throughout the Delta in their dealings with George D. Roberts, their main interest was in the reclamation of Union Island, then including what is now known as Vistoria Island. They bought not only the Tide Land Reclamation Company's holdings on the island, but also the 4,400 acres belonging to Captain George Kidd, a retired riverboat entrepreneur. (Irwin, 12-13). Williams and Bixler began levee construction on the 28,000-acre island in 1878, taking over from the Tide Land Reclamation Company. The partners' levees were substantial but the south end of their property adjoined the old Mexican land grant known as El Pescadero, then owned by Henry M. Naglee, whose levees were less secure. In February, 1878, floodwaters topped Naglee's levees and flooded part of Williams' and Bixler's portion of the island. To prevent a recurrence of that disaster, Williams began a new levee following the Pescadero grant line from Middle River on the east to a point known as Elk Ridge and then north to again intersect Middle River. The levee was built by horse scrapers to an eight foot height except on one mile that proved too boggy for the horses. At that point, Chinese labor was used to complete the levee. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 5).

Williams described his levee construction methods to E. E. Tucker in late 1878 or 1879. Tucker's notes reveal the following information about the grant line levee and other Union Island levees built by Williams and Bixler.

"The past year we constructed another scraper levee on the line of what is called the Pescadero Rancho, of an average height near eight feet, four feet wide on top with slopes of four to one on the outside and three to one on the inside."

"I regard that as the best shape of any scraper levee made by us, and would recommend in all cases of scraper levee to give the levee bulk and solidity by means of heavy slopes rather than width on top."

"By that means, the body of the material is placed where it has to resist pressure most. The greater the slope, the better the levee."

"On peat lands we have constructed our levees by building two training walls of peat, and then pumping in the sand between them until the space is filled."

"It makes a better levee than any I have ever seen in this or any other country."

"The peat stands wash better than any other material which can be exposed to the water and the sand gives weight and solidity to the structure, besides filling all the holes, crevices and spaces of the peat walls."

"Our training walls are about three feet wide on top and fifteen at the base, while the sand filling is reversed, being about fifteen feet on top and eight feet at the base."

"These levees were intended to be about eight feet high; but they have settled greatly and will have to be added to."

"One advantage of such a levee is that it exposes all the weak places in the land upon which it is placed and continues to sink and settle until it secures a firm foundation."

"It is an expensive levee on the plan adopted by us, having cost us sixteen thousand dollars per mile, while the scraper levees above-mentioned of greater dimensions have cost only from six to eight thousand dollars per mile."
(S.E.D. Notes, No. 92,3).

Williams' comments as recorded by Tucker do not explain how the sand was pumped in between the peat retaining walls. A biography of Williams' life based on a dictation made shortly before his death in 1886 by associates of historian H. H. Bancroft throws further light on his levee construction methods. Peat soil used by itself made inferior levees, so Williams cast about for a way to bring mineral soils to his levees. The answer was a dredge that scooped up sediment with an endless chain of buckets and elevated it to a height of 45 feet where it went into a hopper and thence through a 150-foot long inclined pipe to the levee. ("Biography of T. H. Williams," n.p.). The dredges used by Williams may have been designed in association with George D. Roberts. (Irwin, 15). Whether constructed by dredger, horse scraper or Chinese labor, Williams and Bixler's Union Island levees were impressive accomplishments for their day. The island was enclosed by such levees by the early 1880's although parts of the domain apparently remained unfit for cultivation for some time.

Another major Delta landowner and reclainer of the 1870's was Serranus Clinton Hastings. Born in New York, Hastings moved to Indiana and then to the Iowa Territory where he became a leading lawyer, territorial delegate to Congress and Chief Justice

of the Iowa Supreme Court when statehood was granted. The California Gold Rush induced Hastings to leave Iowa in early 1850, but he did not head for the mines. Instead he was elected the first Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. In 1852, he became Attorney General and served a two-year term, after which he returned to a lucrative private practice. Hastings specialized in the handling of cases involving Mexican land grants where the protracted litigation often left the Mexican grantees improverished and their ranches in the hands of their attorneys. Hastings owned land in various places throughout California and at one time bought half the town of Benicia on the unsuccessful speculation that the State Capitol would be located there. He also invested heavily in Delta real estate and reclamation, perhaps because of an association with James B. Haggin and Lloyd Tevis that lasted 16 years. (Johnson, 9-22; San Francisco Call, September 8, 1890). Haggin and Tevis had been associated with George D. Roberts in the Tide Land Reclamation Company, Haggin serving for a time as the Company's president.

Like Roberts and most other reclaimers, Hastings used Chinese labor to build his levees, but unlike Roberts he disliked them while at the same time admitting the necessity of having a pool of cheap, hardworking labor.

"I think the Chinaman has been, so far as developing some of the resources of California is concerned, indispensibly necessary, as in the reclamation of our submerged lands. I have spent more than fifty thousand dollars in the reclamation of these submerged lands. I have done it with Chinamen."

(Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 588).

Their value as citizens, however, he questioned, referring to the "peons, I please to call them" as "a fungus, a foreign substance, an unhealthy substance." (Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 590).

Already mentioned as an associate of Roberts and Hastings, James Ben Ali Haggin was another important capitalist involved in Delta reclamation. Haggin came to California from Kentucky in the Gold Rush and established a legal practice that gave him sufficient capital to invest in mining stocks. His associates in these ventures included his partner Lloyd Tevis and George Hearst. Together they developed the Anaconda Copper Mine in Butte Montana and the Homestake Gold Mine in the Black Hills, two of the greatest mining properties in the American West. (Paul, 147, 180, 185). His investments made him a wealthy man with all the badges of that status including a private railway car, a steam yacht and a Derby-winning race horse. (Burnley, 265-270). The Tide Land Reclamation Company, of which Haggin was once president, had held about two-thirds of Staten Island between the forks of the

Mokelumne River. Five foot high levees were erected in 1873 only to be damaged severely in 1875. The island's northern portion was higher in elevation and had been settled by small owners by 1864 when a low levee was built at that end. (USBR, Report DL-5, 9). By about 1877, Haggin had succeeded to the Tide Land Reclamation Company's Staten Island lands as well as the property at the northern end so that he owned all of Staten Island except for a parcel at the southwestern corner. E. E. Tucker's field notes from 1879 tell a more complex story of land ownership than revealed by other documents, so the precise stages of Haggin's acquisition of the island are in some doubt. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 5). At any rate, Haggin's acquisition of the island was followed by its transfer from Sacramento County's jurisdiction to San Joaquin County, settling a boundary dispute that had not seemed so pressing until development proceeded to the point that Haggin and any other owners on the island by 1878 yearned for the lower taxes of San Joaquin County. (Thompson and West, 133). Haggin leased land to tenant farmers, as did all of the large-scale reclaimers, and by 1879 a short-lived little town known as Hagginsville was established on the North Fork of the Mokelumne River with 200 citizens. (Thompson and West, 133; Thompson, 421-422; San Francisco Bulletin, Nov. 28, 1879). Haggin finally sold Staten Island to the Staten Island Land Company about 1900.

Henry Douglas Bacon, who had interests in banking, mining and agricultural development in southern California, was another important investor in Delta reclamation who, like T. H. Williams, became closely involved with construction activities on his lands. Unlike Williams, however, Bacon's earnest efforts did not succeed in permanently reclaiming his island holdings. It has been generally reported that Bacon Island, lying north of historic Union Island between Old River and Middle River, was leveed in 1872 but abandoned due to floods in 1874 and left unreclaimed until the Twentieth Century. (USBR, Report DL-8, 5-6). Examination of manuscript records reveals a much different history that deserves closer examination.

An 1870 map of San Joaquin County showed S. C. Hastings in control of Bacon Island but E. E. Tucker, on the authority of H. D. Bacon, reported that Bacon, Sherman Day and S. C. Hastings bought a 9,000-acre tract in 1872 from the Tide Land Reclamation Company. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 10). The precise boundaries of the sale are unclear but may have included much of present-day Mandeville Island as well as modern Bacon Island. Sherman Day was placed in charge of levee construction and quickly completed a six-foot high levee around the island. The levee was set back about 100 feet from the riverbank as a compromise between Day's desire for a larger set-back to allow a flood channel and Bacon's wish to levee right to the water's edge to get more land within

the levee. The completion of the levee in the fall of 1872 allowed Bacon to burn and seed his land in the winter of 1872-1873. However, a flood in June, 1873, destroyed the levee and the crop. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 10-11).

Peat was a notoriously unstable levee material. Col. William Birdie Hyde noted that under changing water pressure from the tides the peat soils would "palpitate as does a woman's breast under certain influences." (Irwin, 17). To locate a better foundation for future levees, Bacon used a sounding rod to measure the depth to hardpan. He discovered that the best underlying soil conditions could be found closest to the rivers.

". . . therefore, I decided to abandon the old levee and build a new one on the hardest and highest land near the river. I then moved my levee out to the river bank, and being led from my examinations to consider that nothing was solid, I conceived the idea of driving piles to hardpan on both sides of the levee, thus forming a box, intending to pile peat into it; but I was mistaken, the peat was too soft and light. After driving 10,000 piles, I gave it up." (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 11-12).

A section of the 1873 levee on Old River was built with a machine known as a Sullivan ditcher that excavated a ditch 12-14 feet wide and 4-5 feet deep, piling the material to one side to form a levee. (See S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 4 for further description). The levee so constructed proved disappointing with parts of it sinking to the old ground level even before the ditcher's contract had been completed. The instability of the new levee was one of the reasons for driving the piles, which were probably placed in late 1873 or early 1874. (S.E.D. Notes, 89, 11-12).

At the same time, a cross levee was cut to separate Day's holdings from those of Bacon. The renewed efforts at reclamation apparently led Bacon to erect a house on Bacon Island in 1873 and Bacon visited the island regularly. (F.S. Page to H. D. Bacon, August 6, 1873). Also in 1873, a financial panic swept the United States making credit tight. Bacon wrote to lawyer S.L.M. Barlow of New York, "I have been doing so much in tule reclamation that I am drained and shall need all the funds I can secure until I make a successful crop." (H.D. Bacon to S.L.M. Barlow, October 24, 1873).

Bacon continued his efforts to build secure levees. He was plagued by levee cracks, seepage, and sinking on his new levees. Two solutions were evolved. One was the use of brush mattresses to tie the levees together, the other was the use of mud from the riverbed in levee construction. Marvin Roberts invented a machine to dredge mud from the river and deposit it on scows. A conveyor then transferred the mud from the scows to the bank. To hold the mud in place until it dried, Bacon drove posts with boards as

crude forms. The weight of the mud caused the new levees to sink with additional mud piled on until the levee stopped sinking. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 13). E. E. Tucker described the situation about 1879 as follows:

Mr. Bacon has lately built seven scows and launched them in the ditches by the side of the cross levees; it is his intention to take mud from the riverbed and, with his "conveyor", deposit it on these scows and move it to different points in his cross levees, loading first one place, then another, until he has settled the whole levee to hardpan; brush will be used to prevent the levee from breaking as it settles. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 14).

While much of the work was going on, Bacon was receiving no income from his lands. In 1876, he noted that he did not yet have enough confidence in the levees to place farmers on the land. (H.D. Bacon to S.L.M. Barlow, April 29, 1876). By the Spring of 1877, he was encouraged by the dry winter to rent portions of the island to men who were putting in a barley crop. (H.D. Bacon to S.L.M. Barlow, June 27, 1877). The heavy rains of early 1878 worried Bacon and he wrote in April that "I am spending larger sums monthly upon my reclamation, which I cannot stop." (H.D. Bacon to S.L.M. Barlow, April 28, 1878.) Bacon's letters contain frequent references to visits to the island and the financial burdens that reclamation was imposing. In January, 1879, he said that "I am spending so much money that when I get a dollar it does not stick to me a moment." (H.D. Bacon to S.L.M. Barlow, January 11, 1879). Later that year he asked Barlow to sell some of his property in May rather than to wait for a better market in October because "my reclamation expenses are large and will continue for sometime yet and some of my old mining engagements are a drain upon me." (H.D. Bacon to S.L.M. Barlow, April 3, 1879). Setbacks continued, with the Stockton Herald of July 23, 1879, reporting that "The levee on Bacon Island on Middle River in the vicinity of the McLaughlin House for a distance of 300 feet in length sank yesterday and went completely out of sight." By 1879, Tucker reported that Bacon had spent \$50 per acre for all the land reclaimed. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 14). The land was not truly reclaimed, making Bacon Island unsuitable for agriculture until it was finally leveed successfully in 1913 by California Delta Farms. Nothing illustrates H. D. Bacon's failure better than the 1905 tax assessment of the Bacon Land and Loan Company's San Joaquin County holdings at only \$10 per acre. (Bacon Land and Loan collection). H. D. Bacon fought tenaciously and at great cost to reclaim his Delta lands, but he was clearly bested by the unstable peat soils.

Bouldin Island was the scene of a reasonably successful early reclamation effort by San Francisco capitalists engaged in the

distillery business. As early as 1861, the island had been organized as Swamp Land District No. 22, but little was done under the district's auspices and the same held true for the years between 1864 and 1871, when the Sargent brothers and Smith held the island. (Thompson and West, 133). In 1871, Stevens, Baker and Company of San Francisco bought the island for \$12,000 and proceeded to construct a levee.

The popular belief at that time, was that all that was necessary to reclaim an island was to dig a ditch, build a small levee, and drain off the surface and seepage water by means of flood gates. Very little attention was paid to the location of the levee, it being left mostly to the Chinamen(.) As a natural consequence, it was very crooked and averaged only from 30 to 40 feet from the river. It was not considered advisable to cut the land between the levee and the river.
(S.E.D. Notes, No. 89, 1).

Stevens, Baker and Company made no major repairs to their small levee even though cracks developed and flooding year after year destroyed the island's crops. The owners finally abandoned the tract in 1874 "after having spent \$65,000 without ever realizing a dollar from crops." (S.E.D. No. 89, 2).

Bouldin Island was rescued from a permanent return to the tules by the Pacific Distillery Company of San Francisco owned by Henry Voorman, George Oulton and F. and J. Schultz who bought it in 1877, with legal title passing to the members of the company individually by 1883. (San Joaquin County, map, 1883). They paid \$64,000 for the island, indicating that Stevens, Baker and Company did not even make back the cost of reclamation. By 1879, Pacific Distilleries had spent a total of \$250,000 on Bouldin Island, and had succeeded in reclaiming it. (S.E.D. Notes No. 89, 3). Reclamation was accomplished with a dredger that took mud from the river bed to make the levee. At first Bouldin Island was farmed directly by the Pacific Distillery Company, but later they adopted the general practice of leasing the land, along with horses, houses and seed to tenants in exchange for a share of the crop. ("Biographical Sketch of Henry Voorman," 8-9). It has been said that the company's object in purchasing the island was to grow grain and potatoes for conversion into alcohol (Rogers, July 9, 1951), but by 1886 the island was the principal source of potatoes for the San Francisco market. ("Biographical Sketch of Henry Voorman," 8).

R. C. Sargent and his brothers had failed to reclaim Bouldin Island as they would later fail to reclaim Empire Tract and King Island, but in the area north of White Slough along the South Fork of the Mokelumne River, they were a major force in reclamation. R. C. Sargent came west in 1849 and after a year as a Placerville storekeeper he moved to San Joaquin County. (Thompson and West, 121). He bought extensive swamp land tracts on the

margin of the Mokelumne River mainland but centered his reclamation efforts around Sargents Slough. Swamp Land District No. 46 in 1865 encompassed over 7,000 acres, all owned by Sargent and reclaimed by him with substantial levees and dams across Sargents Slough and other small watercourses. He grew grain on the firmer, reclaimed lands and ran cattle on the unreclaimed areas, the land that would later become Empire Tract and King Island being known for years as Sargent's Cattle Ranch. When he died in 1903, he was San Joaquin County's largest landowner.

Other capitalists tried their hands at Delta reclamation or speculation with limited success in the Nineteenth Century. John Coffee Hays and Sherman Day both held land in the Mandeville Island-Bacon Island area of San Joaquin County and both also served as U. S. Surveyor General for California, suggesting a possible link between that public office and the purchase of public lands for speculative purposes. Both Bacon Island and Mandeville Island were first reclaimed in the early 1870's, but the levees proved unstable and neither island was successfully farmed until the Twentieth Century. John C. Caperton, a land investor who with John C. Hayes held much of the site of Oakland, also had property on Mandeville Island. The list of minor capitalists engaged in Delta land transactions could easily be extended even further for the ownership maps of the Delta for the last several decades of the Nineteenth Century are a directory of sorts to the State's leading businessmen.

Not only Californians speculated in swampland reclamation. One of the largest companies was formed by Scottish investors from Glasgow in 1877, who hoped to turn a profit on the reclamation of Roberts Island. That island had seen an incomplete attempt at reclamation by the Tide Land Reclamation Company, and smaller owners were also building levees in the 1870's. J. P. Whitney bought the Tide Land Reclamation Company's holdings on Roberts Island in 1875, concentrating his reclamation efforts on the Upper and Middle divisions at the southern, higher end of the island. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 90, 15). By late 1876, the Middle Division had been leveed and Whitney sold out to Morton Coates Fisher. Fisher soon interested the Scottish investors and the Glasgow-Californian Land Company was formed to pump more capital into the island's reclamation. (Thompson, 487-488). Fisher managed to sell 30,000 acres that he had purchased to the Scottish firm which then contracted with him to build levees, dams and sluiceways. Work began with renewed vigor and by the end of 1877, some 40,000 pounds sterling had gone into 32 miles of levees, dams and gates largely on the so-called Lower Division at the northern end of present-day Roberts Island. (Glasgow-Californian papers; USBR, Report DL-9, 7). The cost of reclaiming about 36,000 acres in the Lower Division was approximately \$10 per acre, with one dam at a slough costing \$25,000. Where

possible, the work was accomplished with horse-drawn scrapers (Thompson and West, 43), but thousands of Chinese were found necessary to complete the levees. (Jackson, 213; Stockton Independent, September 21, 1877). Levee maintenance, however, proved a continuing headache and although the land was farmed by tenants, the Glasgow-Californian Land Company failed to make a profit on their investment. In fact, in 1886, the shareholders voted to begin winding up an enterprise that had lost at least one million dollars. (Jackson, 216).

The details of the individual reclaimers can be woven together to reveal a pervasive pattern to Delta reclamation after 1868. The State's decision to abolish the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners and thus weaken the district organization process was followed by the opening of the swamp and overflowed lands to acquisition unfettered by any acreage restriction. The impact of the latter action was immediately apparent as George D. Roberts began buying up huge sections of the tule lands. Roberts and his associates and those who came after them did, of course, have the financial resources to undertake some of the larger-scale reclamation projects. Yet they were not always popular. William Holttum, a Grand Island farmer, voiced his unhappiness with the large landholders in a letter written in 1879. His comments deserve quotation at length.

"Under the present system, the swamp lands are divided into swamp land districts, and the riverbanks are owned by settlers who occupy the lands in person, having large orchards and vineyards and the interior of the districts are low and swampy, having water on them nine or ten months in the year.

The banks lands are mostly segregated from the swamp lands and their titles are U. S. patents, and these speculators have secured title to a majority of acres in each district and secured the passage of a law giving the control of a district to a majority of acres; they then organize the district and elect themselves trustees, and this trusteeship gives them the power to let all contracts and purchase material for reclamation.

They then let contracts to their friends and employ engineers in their interest and if the engineers refuse to work in their interest, they are immediately discharged. These speculators generally take the contracts themselves and having power to audit their own accounts and draw warrents against the district in their own favor, they levy unreasonable assessments against the lands and pay their warrents and then sue the settlers if they refuse to pay theirs.....

.....General Thomas H. Williams owns on Grand Island 11,500 acres of land, pays scarcely any taxes, has no improvements or personal property, yet he has power under the law to control not only his own land, but all the lands in the district and levy taxes at will.

The lands of Williams' are all under water, and the settlers

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lands on the riverbank are in cultivation and get no benefits from reclamation, yet they are taxed equal and Williams grinds out warrants by the thousands of dollars for his contracts, as he calls them; he has a mud pump which he is renting to himself at an enormous price, which is simply pumping mud on his low lands; and the settlers land will be expected to pay for it." (S.E.D. Notes, No. 94, 17-18).

Holtum identified the principal culprits; a list that parallels many of the names already discussed in this section.

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"These San Francisco land owners are mostly stock brokers and manage the Swamp Land Districts in the same manner as they do a mine, by freezing everybody else out. Thomas H. Williams, G. D. Roberts, D. Zeile, Genl. H. M. Naglee, Parks of Calusa (sic) County, J. B. Haggin and Lloyd Tevis, R. C. Sargent, Bonnicastle, Sol. Heydenfeldt, and J. M. Pearson and men of that ilk are the men who have control of these lands, also Dr. Ryer who holds immense tracts of tule land and keeps them from being successfully reclaimed." (S.E.D. Notes, No. 94, 18).

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Of course, Holtum had an axe to grind, and the Grand Island case did not have universal application for the existence of extensive bank lands was confined to a limited number of localities, primarily along the Sacramento River. His assessment of the character of the great landowners was not altogether inaccurate. They were forty-niners at heart, the kind of men novelist Frank Norris described in his portrait of San Joaquin Valley wheat grower, Magnus Derrick.

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At the very bottom, when all was said and done, Magnus remained the Forty-niner . . . For all his public spirit, for all his championship of justice and truth, his respect for the law, Magnus remained the gambler, willing to play for colossal stakes, to hazard a fortune on the chance of winning a million. It was the true California spirit that found expression through him . . . It was in this frame of mind that Magnus and the multitude of other ranchers of whom he was a type, farmed their ranches. They had no love of the land. They were not attached to the soil. (Norris, 198).

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Roberts and Williams, Haggin and Hastings and the other investor-speculators in Delta reclamation were indeed gamblers and they often lost. The Glasgow-Californian Land Company lost a million dollars or more. Stevens, Baker and Company lost at least \$13,000 by even the simplest calculation. Bacon, Hays, Day, Caperton and many others were left with nothing but abandoned islands to show for their investments. Henry Voorman, who entered the Delta through Pacific Distilleries and later owned land on Tyler Island as well as Bouldin Island, considered his reclamation investments to have a poor return. He told one of H. H. Bancroft's interviewers that he believed many others, including Haggin and Roberts had had little success in their financial

*Voorman
Bouldin*

dealings in the tide lands. ("Biographical Sketch of Henry Voorman," 8). In all likelihood, costly swamp land reclamation was not a highly profitable proposition. Very few of the reclaimers, however, depended on Delta lands exclusively and some, like Haggin and Williams, brought substantial fortunes to the Delta. Even those like Bacon who spent heavily and took personal interest in the work had a great many other interests and prominent financial connections. The capitalists in other words, were not Delta men with other businesses, but rather important men who invested some portion of their time and money in the Delta.

Regardless of the monetary outcome of the reclamation process, the large-scale reclaimers did have their accomplishments. The entrepreneurs should be given credit for trial and error research into levee-making machinery such as dredges, into construction techniques and operational patterns. Union and Roberts islands, both huge tracts, were reclaimed as was the Pescadero grant in the southern Delta. Bouldin Island, Andrus Island, Tyler Island, Staten Island and the Mokelumne River mainland tracts were reclaimed by the turn-of-the-century. The lands reclaimed in the Nineteenth Century were by-and-large lands on intermediate organic or mineral soils; the successful reclamation of tracts wholly in the peat zone was rare with Bouldin Island being the prominent exception. Thus despite decades of activity, the first years of the Twentieth Century saw thousands of acres of the central Delta from Empire Tract to Upper Jones Tract to the Contra Costa County mainland still not permanently reclaimed. The story of the Delta from 1868 to 1890's was in large measure one of the impact of Gold Rust businessmen; by 1900 a new generation of investors was ready to enter the scene.

R. P. EASLEY, President

"Manning the Earth"

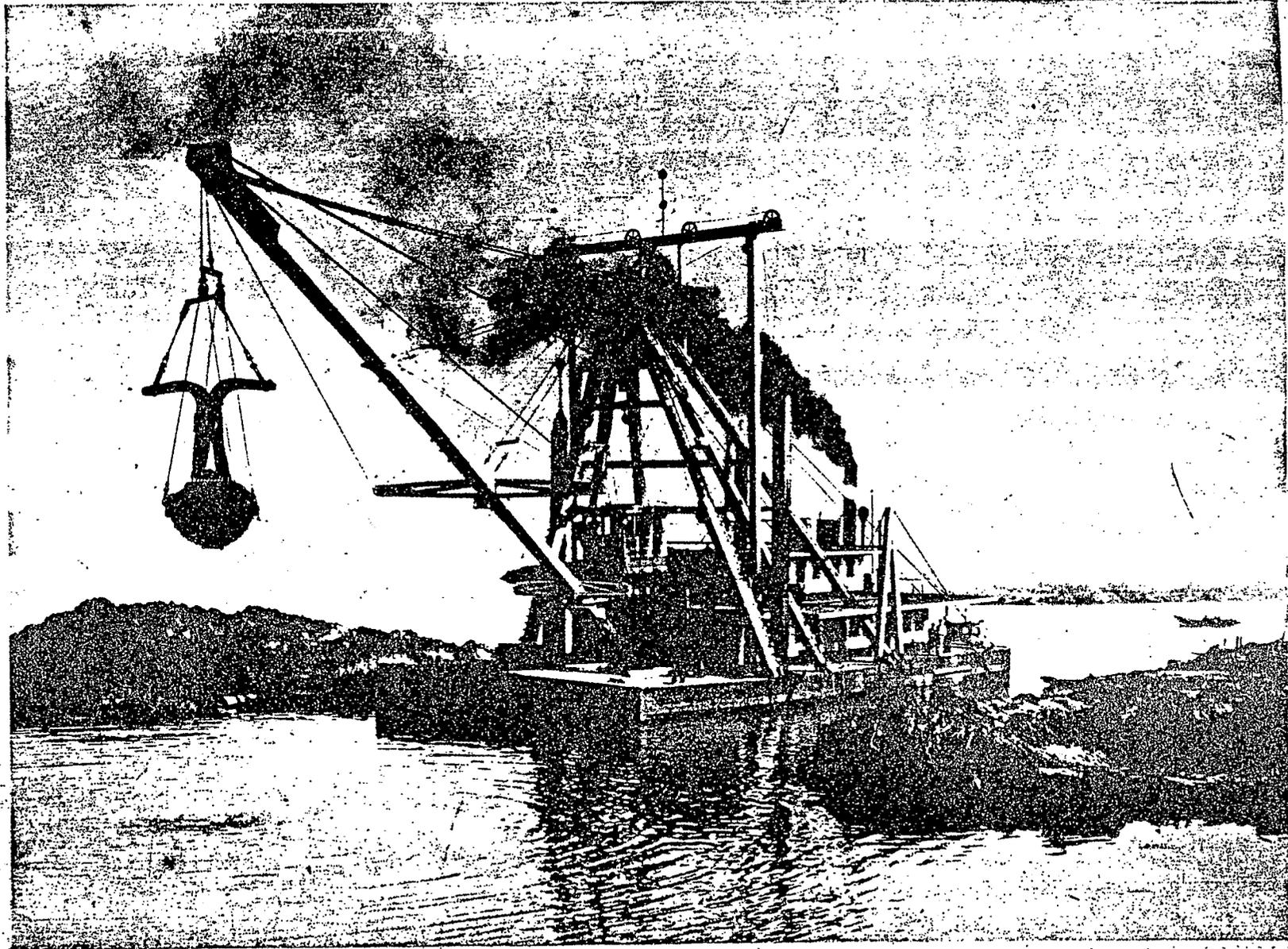
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L. W. MEHAFFEY, *Secretary*



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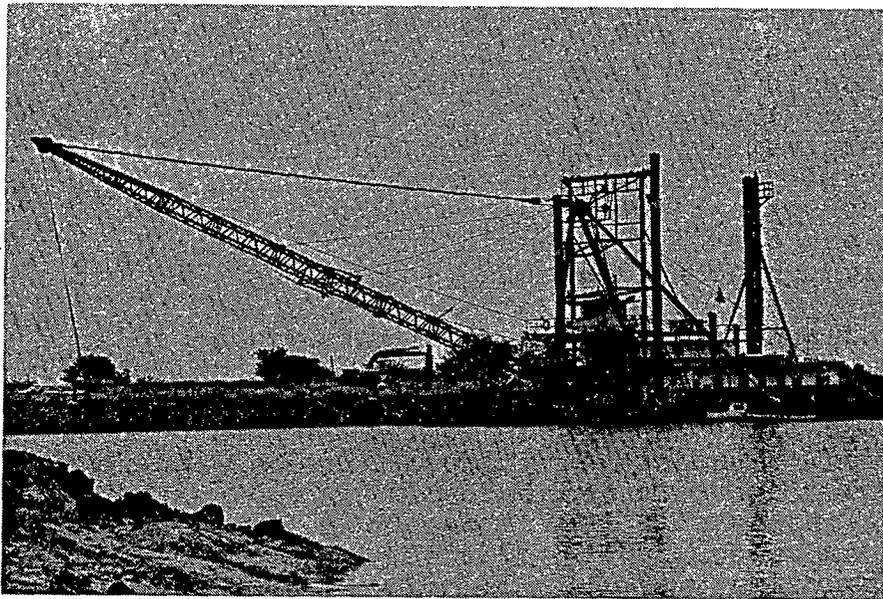
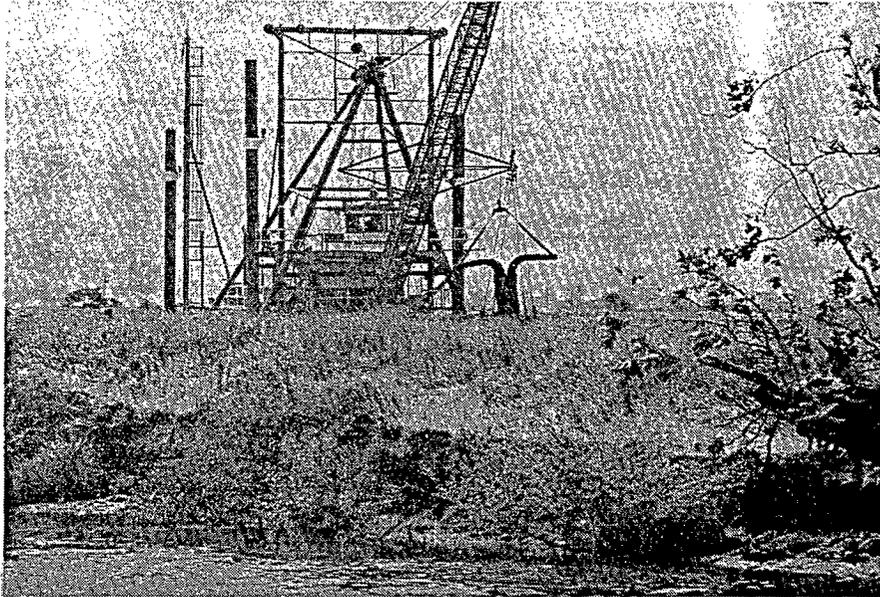
THE NEW "ROBERTS ISLAND DREDGE," TURNTABLE TYPE
BOOM LENGTH, 165 FEET; BUCKET, 3-CU. YDS.

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Dredger Sacramento at work in Georgiana Slough, 1978

IV. Modern Reclamation, 1900-1920

The Lowland Delta

Final reclamation of the islands of the lower San Joaquin River occurred many years after that of the islands along the edges of the Delta. This was caused largely by the difficulty of building adequate levees on the unstable peat soils common to the interior Delta. (McIntosh interview, SWRCB Draft EIR, p. 111-124). These deeper peat lands, in their natural state, resembled "a stack of moderately rotted hay, incapable of supporting the weight of a horse." (Stockton Record, October 14, 1922). In addition, the low elevation of these islands meant that they were subject to regular inundation by high tides that rose a few feet above the surface. Not only were levees necessary to exclude waters raised by the tides each day, but also to shut out winter flood waters. Possessing little knowledge of previous flood levels or of scientific flood control of rivers, early owners of the peat lands assumed that a levee of four or five feet above high tide would adequately bar flood waters. Little consideration was given to the fact that flood water levels would increase as a result of confining the water in the channels formed by these levees. Failure of levees was common, but landowners continued to build them higher and higher to keep pace with the increasing flood height. (Stockton Record, October 10, 1922). Although never entirely alleviated, the flood problem reached a peak in the early Twentieth Century, declining dramatically thereafter as a result of the Sacramento River Flood Control Project adopted by the State in 1911 and the Federal Government in 1917, and by the construction of upstream reservoirs.

The means of constructing levees on peat lands that were sufficiently solid enough to stay in place were not immediately available. It had been discovered that effective levees could not be built of peat, but rather should be constructed of heavier soils, such as the sediment from river bottoms. The first attempts at dredger design intended to mine that mud and place it on levees had been flawed, sometimes because they cut a trench or borrow pit too close to the levee. The answer to this problem came in 1879 with the invention of the clamshell dredge, which became the standard tool of Delta reclamation because it could efficiently scoop mud from channel bottoms and deposit it accurately a safe distance from the borrow areas. Once built, the instability of the peat levees required a near-constant effort to maintain and strengthen them. Dredgers were often sent around islands repeatedly, adding more material to the levees to compensate for the compaction of the peat foundation. (Fallman interview; McIntosh interview).

As in the Nineteenth Century, Twentieth Century reclamation required substantial resources of financial capital, the consolidated ownership of large tracts of land, and considerable engineering expertise. Levees around the peat islands of the central Delta had crowns averaging twenty feet in height and with

TWENTIETH CENTURY PEAT LAND RECLAMATION

Island/ Tract	Early Attempts at Reclamation	Final Reclamation	Known Major Floods	Present Districts Organized
Bacon	1872-1877	1915	1879	1918
Bishop	1871-73, 1899	1913		
Drexler	1892-93	ca. 1911		
Empire	1909	1909	1955	1918
Franks	1902-06	Flooded 1938	1907, 1936	
Holland	1910	1910		1918
Jones ¹	1870-75	1902	1906-07	1919
King	ca. 1911	ca. 1911		1919
Mandeville	1872	1914	1907, 1938	1918
McDonald ²	1870-78	ca. 1913	1878, 1913	1818
Medford	ca. 1916	ca. 1916	1936	1919
Mildred	1913	1918-20	1917	1917
Orwood	1903	1903		1918
Palm	1903	1907	1907	1919
Quimby	1913	1913	1936, 1938, 1955	
Rhode	1938	flooded		
Rindge	1873-75	ca. 1919		1919
Venice	1873	1906	1878, 1906, 1907, 1909, 1938, 1950	1918
Victoria	ca. 1899	1900	1901, 1907	1919
Webb	1870-72	ca. 1912	1872-73, 1950	1918
Woodward	ca. 1902	1902		1926

Sources: U.S.B.R. Delta Lowland Reports, Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9; Fallman, Busalacci and McIntosh interviews; assorted maps of San Joaquin County, 1870-1904.

1) including both Upper and Lower Jones Tracts

2) including Henning Tract

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bases of from 120 to 150 feet, and could cost as much as \$20,000 per mile. (Stockton Record, March 30, 1919).

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The financial backing for Nineteenth Century reclamation had come from fortunes amassed in mining or trade in post-Gold Rush northern California. After 1900, capital flowed into the Delta from a group of southern California investors whose fortunes were derived from the insurance business and from real estate management. As in the case of many of the Nineteenth Century reclaimers, they were men of wide interests to whom the Delta represented only one of many investments. The most common bond between the men whose names appear as directors or incorporators of Delta companies after 1900 was an association with the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, located in Los Angeles. Several were also involved with the Union Oil Company, Southern California Edison, and various finance companies. (Hunt, pp. 76, 81; Who's Who in Los Angeles County, pp. 34, 46; Articles of Incorporation, Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, California Delta Farms, Incorporated).

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The three most prominent names in this group were those of Frederick Hastings Rindge, George Ira Cochran, and Lee Allen Phillips. Rindge, son of a wealthy New England woolen merchant, inherited a two million dollar estate in 1883. He then bought the Malibu Rancho and moved to California in 1887. His valuable rancho, extending for 25 miles along the southern California coastline, was "one of the great grain, cattle and hog producing properties of the south." Rindge was also involved in forming the Union Oil Company and Southern California Edison, and was known as "one of the most notable actuaries in the country, a man who made and handled millions of dollars for himself and associates." (Robinson, p. 24; Hunt, p. 81; Byron Times Sixth Booster Edition, 1919, p. 109).

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When they arrived in Los Angeles in the early 1890's, Cochran and Phillips were both ambitious young attorneys whose family connections gave them possession of the appropriate social and religious credentials to secure personal power in "polite society." Both mens' fathers were associated with the University of Southern California, Dr. Phillips as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Cochran as Dean of the Maclay College of Theology. (Moore, p. 99). Upon his arrival in 1893, George Cochran immediately organized a corporate law firm which propelled him into the social and economic circles that were transforming southern California. During the financial panic of that year, his able representation as attorney for the Los Angeles Clearinghouse earned for him a widespread reputation for his sound financial advice. Phillips joined Cochran's prestigious law firm in 1894. Renowned for their mastery of the complexities of corporate finance, they were to earn their reputation over the years for work done at their desks and in conference rooms, not in court. Successful in giving corporate advice and attuned to the accelerated pace of business activities in Los Angeles, both men soon

abandoned the practice of law and in 1900 joined with Rindge to form the Conservative Life Insurance Company. Six years later this company was to come to the rescue of the faltering Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company. (National Cyclopedia of American Biography, v. 28, p. 331, v. 37, p. 218; Articles of Incorporation, Conservative Life Insurance Co.).

Associated with Cochran, Phillips and Rindge were men like Isaac Milbank, John Barnes Miller, and Albert J. Wallace, and their names are in various Delta reclamation companies formed in the early Twentieth Century. Phillips' tenure as Chief Investment Officer and Executive Vice President of Pacific Mutual (1906-1933) paralleled chronologically his involvement in Delta reclamation. His stature as "an astute and sophisticated financier" was well-known and under his guidance, Pacific Mutual enjoyed rapid and prosperous expansion. (Nunis, p. 35). Placing confidence in Phillips' acute financial genius and his bold reclamation scheme, his wealthy business associates invested heavily.

Lee A. Phillips became interested in reclamation as a result of his acquisition of swampland in southern California's Cienega Rancho in lieu of a legal fee. He traveled to Holland to study reclamation methods and later successfully drained his property. (National Cyclopedia of American Biography, v. 28, p. 331). In 1902, Rindge, Cochran, Phillips and other Los Angeles capitalists organized the Middle River Navigation and Canal Company. This organization, predecessor of the better known Middle River Land and Navigation Company, purchased 25,000 acres of tule land in the San Joaquin Delta, apparently at a public sale held by the Pacific States Savings and Loan Company. (Articles of Incorporation, Middle River Navigation and Canal Company; San Francisco Chronicle, April 3, 1937). Over the next few years "through the efforts of Lee Phillips, about five or six different corporations were formed to reclaim one island at a time . . . each corporation taking a different island." (McIntosh interview). These companies, such as the Holland Land and Water Company and the Orwood Land and Water Company, were organized to purchase and reclaim a specific island, as suggested by their names. (McIntosh interview).

In 1912, Phillips consolidated seven of the smaller, single island reclamation companies into California Delta Farms, Incorporated, an \$8,000,000 corporation organized for the purpose of developing and then subdividing nine island tracts. (Stockton Daily Independent, March 30, 1919; Modesto Evening News, April 3, 1919). In 1913, the Company's annual report noted that it had amassed 45,000 acres, with 22,000 already reclaimed and the rest scheduled for reclamation by 1915. California Delta Farms owned and operated eleven dredgers, a floating pumping plant and assorted boats and barges, valued at \$410,000. The report estimated that once fully reclaimed, the land would be worth \$11,801,000. Besides his interests in California Delta Farms, Phillips managed the Rindge Land and Navigation Company's 21,000 acres of Delta lands on Rindge, Upper and Lower Jones and Palm tracts. (Statement of California Delta Farms, Incorporated, 1913).

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CORPORATE RECLAMATION OF LOWLAND DELTA

COMPANY	City of Primary Residence (if available)	Victoria Land Co. (1943)	Old River Farms Co. (1920)	Productive Properties, Ltd. (1920)	Woodward Inland Co. (1912)	Victoria Farms Co. (1913)	California Delta Farms Inc. (1912, 1916)	Key-Zukerman Co. (1927)	Empire Navigation Co. (1926)	Flodge Land & Navigation Co. (1925)	Holland Land and Water Co. (1925)	California Reclaimed Lands Co. (1905)	Middle River Navigation & Canal Co. (1902)	Middle River Farming Co. (1901)	Conservative Life Insurance Co. (1900)	Old River Land and Reclamation Company (1896)	City of Primary Residence (if available)	Officers Stockholders, Directors
Berton, George	St.									X								
ber, S. L.										X	X							
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rdon, I. L.	SF, St.					X												
rett, _____	Reno			X														
pton, George M.	St.								X									
andler, C. L.									X	X								
chran, George I	LA		X	X	X	X	X	X										
vis, V. H.	LA								X									
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ley, H. S.	LA								X									
ley, _____	Reno																	
ischhaker, H.	SF						X											
lie, R. C.												X	X					
d, John	St.	X										X						
rboe, P. R.		X																
et, F. E.		X																
ons, G. F. & F. G.	SF															X		
lung, S.										X	X	X						
bank, Isaac	LA									X								
ller, John B.	LA																	
llips, Lee A.	LA		X	X	X	X	X	X										
dge F. H. & M. K.	LA		X	X	X					X								
ffer, J. W.	St.								X	X	X							
ugnessy, _____	Reno			X														
ma, George T.	Berk.						X											
ats, William R.							X		X									
lace, A. J. & F.	LA									X	X	X						
st, F. A.	St, SF											X						
l, E. M.	St.																	
lians, N., R.E., W.J.	LA		X							X	X							
lf, William H.	SF																	
rkman, M. HG, RC	St.							X	X									

KEY TO CITY ABBREVIATIONS:
 Berk. = Berkeley
 LA = Los Angeles
 SF = San Francisco
 St. = Stockton

Lee Phillips and his various companies, together with the Rindge interests, reclaimed the central Delta, the difficult peat lands that had brought grief to such Nineteenth Century reclaimers as Henry D. Bacon. Ample investment in dredges and competent engineers such as California Delta Farms' Chief Engineer, George Atherton, made the transformation possible. One or more dredgers would work around an island, often straightening island contours, sacrificing peninsulas in order to build a stronger levee. When the levee was nearly ready to close, two or more dredgers would be brought in to speed up the process. Once Phillips and Atherton had a secure levee established, the company contracted with George Shima, who

"dyked the islets, dug transverse ditches for drainage, and installed machinery to pump the superfluous water into the river. The virgin soil was then steam-ploughed and permitted to lie fallow for a few years to enable the brush and tule to rot and fertilize the ground. After this preparation, the reclaimed land was tested and found ideal for the cultivation of potatoes." (Pajus, p. 85).

Phillips and his associates had never intended to become agriculturalists; their land development investment was aimed at the resale of the tracts they had reclaimed from the tules. However, it was deemed prudent to withhold the newly reclaimed lands from the market for a few years to be sure that the levees were sound before offering them for sale. During the interim period California Delta Farms and other companies leased their acreage to tenants, just as Delta land owners had been doing since the 1870's. The California Delta Farms' 1913 Annual Statement noted that all of the lands reclaimed to that date were "being leased for a term of years for a cash rent. The balance of the land will be ready for leasing January 1, 1916." (Statement of California Delta Farms, Incorporated, 1913). The report detailed the high yields to be expected from the rich Delta peat, and noted that "the plan of the company is to rent in large acreage, but in the near future to commence the subdivision into small tracts and sale thereof. Heretofore, none of the lands in this section have been offered for sale." (Statement of California Delta Farms, Incorporated, 1913).

California Delta Farms was not alone in its plan for subdivision. As late as 1925, the San Francisco-based Wright Corporation, a relatively minor reclaimer, was also plainly motivated by the potential profits of land sales. "The business of the Wright Corporation in truth, is, to reclaim lands, make agricultural land more productive, and to demonstrate the fertility by farming such land at a profit until it is subdivided and sold to great advantage." (Byron Times Ninth Development Edition, 1924-25, p. 188). The emphasis on profits from land sales rather than retention meant that the Twentieth Century reclamation speculators were pursuing the same essential course as George D. Roberts and many of the entrepreneurs who came after him. The basic patterns of corporate development remained substantially unbroken.

Farming Operations

A great deal, if not most, of the actual farming done in the Delta in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century was done by Chinese and Japanese tenants and laborers. Landowners set up farms on their islands of various sizes and equipped them for occupation by tenants. On Victoria Island, for example, more than 5,000 acres were leased to tenants at an annual rent of \$25.00 per acre. The remainder of the 7,300-acre island was tilled on shares. There were forty farms on the island, each equipped with houses, sheds, barns, and river landings and averaging about 200 acres in size. (Byron Times Third Booster Edition, 1912, p. 72). The 21,300 acres of the Rindge Land and Navigation Company were

"all rented to responsible tenants, and each tract of land is under cultivation. The present policy of the company is for short leases, except in cases where the crop desired to be grown requires a long term. Rent collections are easily made and tenants are always glad to locate on these lands, leasing tracts from 100 acres and up." (Byron Times Third Booster Edition, 1912, pp. 68-69).

California Delta Farms followed the accepted Delta pattern of tenantry in the years following reclamation, with the records of Contra Costa County, for example, showing numerous leases, with those in 1917-1919 being largely to Japanese. (Contra Costa County Recorder's Office record books).

Asian labor had helped build the Delta's first levees and the Chinese had continued to be an integral part of the Delta's economic structure. In the last decade of the Nineteenth Century Japanese immigration contributed another Oriental labor force for California agriculture. Most of these Japanese immigrants were single males, with no family ties in California and thus useful in migratory, seasonal jobs. Japanese "bosses" organized their countrymen into gangs and acted as contractors, negotiating with the landowners to supply a reliable pool of labor at a fixed price. (Iwata, p. 28; Naka, p. 51).

Not only were the Chinese and Japanese useful as laborers, they were valuable as tenants as well. An article in the Saturday Evening Post in 1911 remarked

"the majority of these alien farmers are notably prosperous and successful. It is hard to find many real failures among them . . . and the lessons taught by the humble and heathen John (Chinese) are peculiarly modern and progressive, in that they apply as much to the business operation of the farm as to the art of securing a heavy yield from small acreage." (Crissey, September 16, 1911, p. 15).

Japanese tenants were in demand by Delta landlords because of their willingness to pay higher shares or cash rents, to make improvements upon lands, and to tolerate housing conditions unacceptable to white tenants. Furthermore, to landowners who operated on a crop-share basis, the higher yields brought by Japanese tenants meant higher profits. (Iwata, pp. 27-29).

Some of the Asian tenant farmers became substantial entrepreneurs. Bing Kee, who came to the Delta in 1905, by 1912 had in cultivation fields of various sizes on Jersey, Veale, Brack, Terminous, Bradford and Byron tracts (Byron Times Third Booster Edition, 1912, p. 131). In 1913 he had farmed 2,700 acres on leases on Byron Tract alone, and was known as "one of the big Chinese farmers of this country." (Bryon Times Third Booster Edition, 1912, p. 80).

One of the most notable of the large-scale Asian farm operators was George T. Shima, the near-legendary "potato king" of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Born in Nagasaki in the 1850's, he attended an agricultural school and was converted to Christianity. He came to California in the early 1880's, working first for Arthur Thornton in the New Hope area of San Joaquin County. A fifteen-acre farm near Woodbridge gave Shima an apprenticeship in potato growing and he prospered to the point that he could engage in reclamation work at Bradford Island in 1899. (Naka, p. 56; Rogers, July 4, November 11, 1951). Shima's greatest success was to come as a result of his close business relationship with Lee A. Phillips. The two men worked together on an oral agreement that Phillips would buy and levee new lands and then lease them to Shima for three years for the cultivation of potatoes. Bouldin Island was one island reclaimed and cultivated on such an agreement. (Thompson, pp. 234-236).

Shima helped create conditions favorable to the transition of the Japanese from wage earners to tenants since he frequently subleased land to other tenants. On his own acreage, Shima reportedly organized work to distribute it throughout the year. Variations in the number of workmen he employed each month were very slight. Reclamation work occupied the winter months, potatoes were planted in the spring and early summer, and digging began about mid-June continuing until early May the following year. Shima's workers, therefore, did not "move to and fro in search of work," nor were they "forced to take up their (winter) quarters in the city." Because of these favorable working conditions, his employees stayed with him "for some years" or "quite a considerable time." (Naka, p. 58).

Although undeniably successful as farmers, the Japanese and Chinese tenants ran afoul of an anti-Asian feeling that was deeply rooted in California history. Anti-Chinese agitation had marked the 1870's and a similar movement grew in response to the influx of Japanese around the turn-of-the-century. Responding to general anti-Japanese feeling in the rural districts of the State, the Legislature passed laws in 1913 that made it difficult for aliens to lease or own land in California. (Iwata, pp. 25, 29). The law was circumvented by having land put in the names of minor children

or having cooperative whites "own" the land for the alien farmer. During the war years (1914-1918), industrial expansion and high wages in factories combined to drain rural California of its agricultural labor force. With high wartime profits and opportunity to expand operations, alien tenants made notable progress between 1914 and 1918. While anti-alien activity calmed during the first World War, the issue heated up again as alien tenants once again came into economic competition with returning soldiers and unemployed war industry workers. Throughout 1919, hostile feelings intensified, culminating in the passage the following year of a tougher law that effectively removed many Asian tenants from Delta fields. "The amended law deprived the Japanese (and other aliens) of the right to lease agricultural land and to act as guardian for a native-born minor if his estate consisted of property which the Japanese could not hold under law." (Iwata, pp. 29-31).

George T. Shima should have been a major victim of the 1920 anti-alien legislation, but it appears that he was able to find sufficient loopholes to continue his large-scale operations. Rather than using his own name, Shima may have operated through corporations such as the Empire Navigation Company or by the agency of Reno investors who with Shima organized the Nevada-based Empire Farms, Incorporated, in 1931. (Rogers, July 20, 1951; Articles of Incorporation, Empire Farms, Incorporated). Shima's actions suggest that there were several ways of circumventing California's restrictive statutes, providing one had sufficient money and legal advice. Popular reports that he owned this or that island in the 1920's, including the story of the trade with Lee Phillips that gave King Island to Phillips in exchange for Mandeville Island, are almost certainly over-simplified. It would probably be more accurate to say lands were controlled by Shima rather than owned by him personally. The question of precisely how George Shima operated in spite of the Alien Land Law is one that deserves further study.

Leasing, to Shima or to anyone else, was not the long-term goal of the investors who put money into Delta reclamation. Real estate sales of improved farms rather than agricultural operations were the hoped-for result of the reclamation process. California Delta Farms was the largest single holder of newly-reclaimed land; lands that were to be farmed by tenants only long enough to prove their value and establish the security of the levee systems. Some tracts, such as Mandeville or McDonald islands, were not offered for subdivision, having been transferred to members of the Phillips-California Delta Farms group such as the Zuckerman family.

By the end of the first World War, it was felt that the reclaimed lands had demonstrated their profitability and value, and California Delta Farms moved toward the final liquidation of its island properties in 1919 and 1920. Northern California newspapers in the spring of 1919 were full of articles detailing

the proposed sales. Headlines read "Delta Farms on Market Now in Small Tracts; Lee A. Phillips and Associates Make it Possible for All to Enjoy Good Land; Forty Thousand Acres Are on Sale Soon on Twenty-Year Payment Plan". (Stockton Independent, March 30, 1919); "Fortunes in Delta Lands." (Byron Times, April 18, 1919); "Delta Farms Subdivided for Homeseekers." (San Francisco Chronicle, April 5, 1919). The sale of Delta lands attracted men and money from across the country, as well as overseas buyers. It was reported that "even delegates to the Foreign Trades Convention have shown an interest." (San Francisco Bulletin, May 15, 1920). An additional attraction lay in the assurance that California Delta Farms would assist the new owner in the leasing of lands sold, free of charge:

"Anyone, even though he may not be a practical farmer, can buy and make large profits from the rich peat lands opened for sale by the California Delta Farms, Inc. The company's offer to lease lands for those not wishing to farm for themselves gives the investor returns for the money he invests." (Stockton Independent, May 4, 1919).

Returns were guaranteed, California Delta Farms told prospective buyers, for unlike investments in gold mines or other speculative ventures, the peat lands "hold gold for everybody that will work them or own them." (Stockton Independent, May 4, 1919). Besides the attraction of high yields, the peat lands were also advertised as attractive on the basis of proximity to cheap transportation:

"On all the holdings of the company (California Delta Farms) the subdivisions will be made to best suit individual conditions. Each farmer will have a landing on the river . . . numerous river steamers, barges and motorboats touch at all landings to discharge and receive mail, crops and supplies. Cheap water (transportation) reduces freight rates to a minimum . . .

Four hundred miles of navigable waterways wind in and out through the Delta. Every tract is accessible to the San Joaquin River or its tributaries. Passengers and freight boats operate out of Stockton, several lines furnishing an ideal schedule. The Santa Fe Railway traverses the country to Stockton, and the Borden Highway is the main link from the Byron country, passing within four miles of Orwood, with connections to the tract." (Byron Times, April 18, 1919).

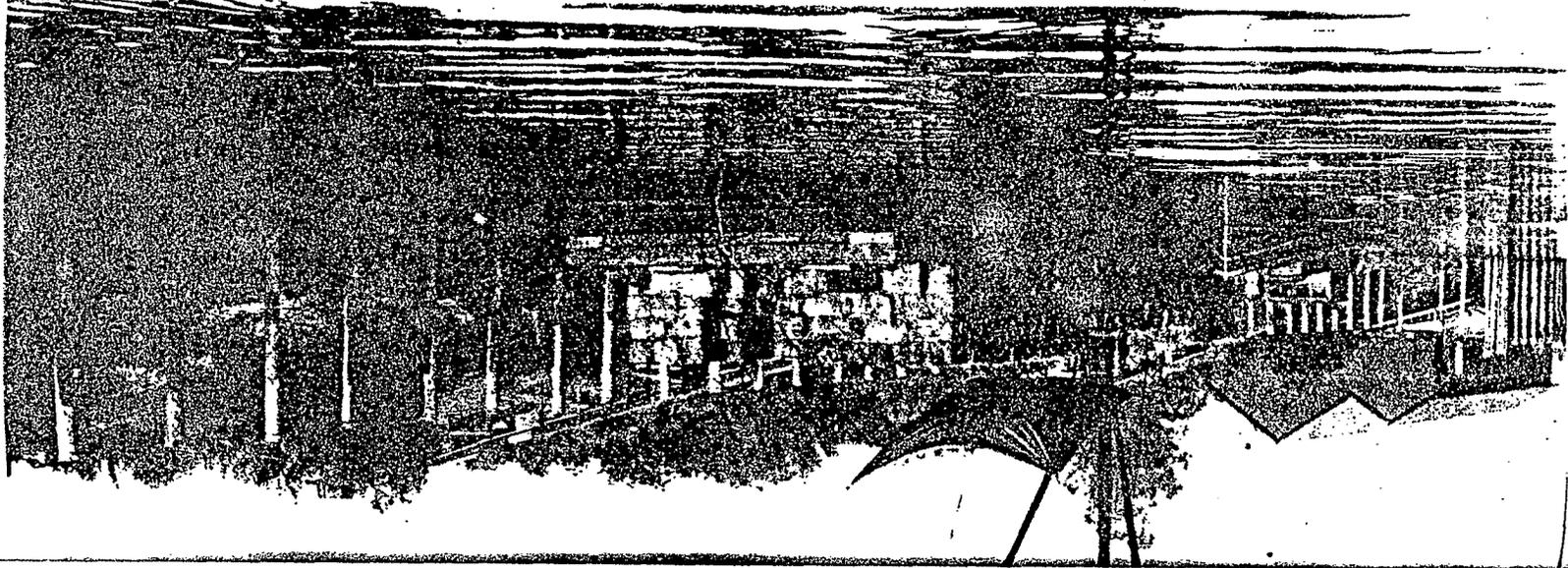
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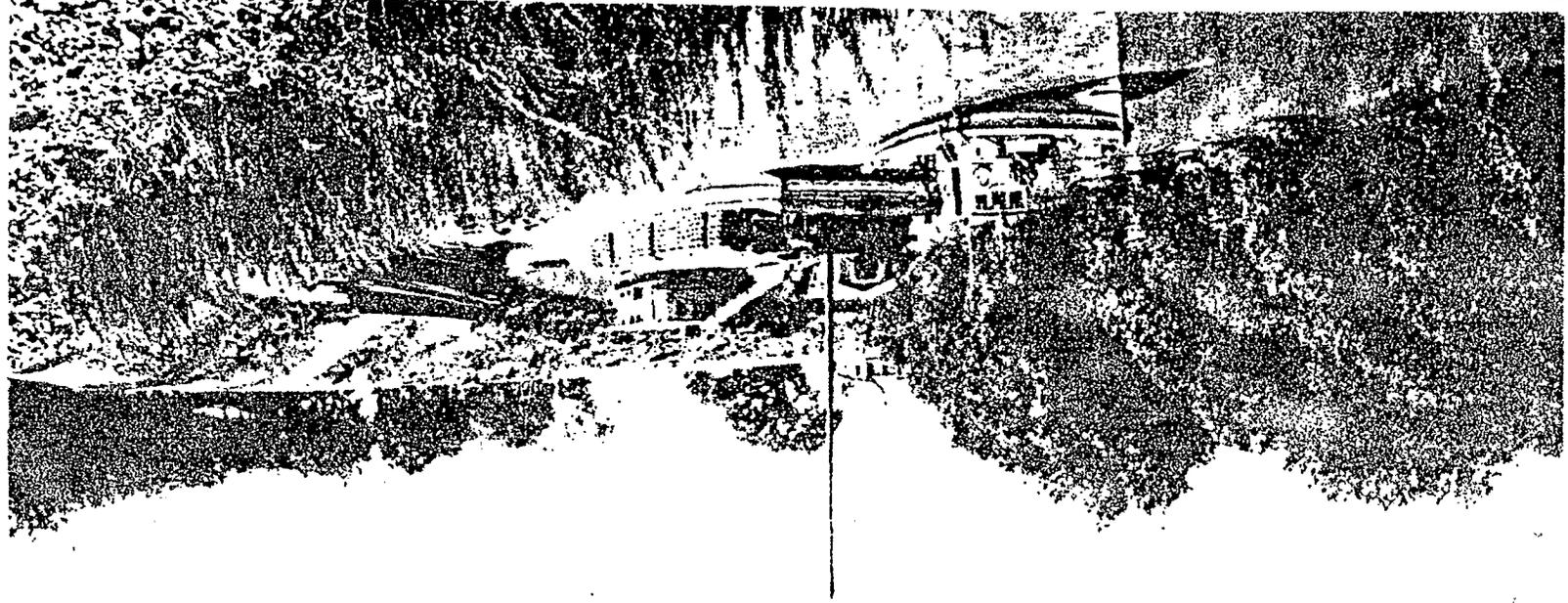
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"Barge Loading Hay on the Sacramento River" (Byron Times Seventh Booster Edition, 1920-21, p. 162)



"A Barge Load of Barley Leaving the Headquarters Camp on Elk Canal" (Byron Times Seventh Booster Edition, 1920-21, p. 162)

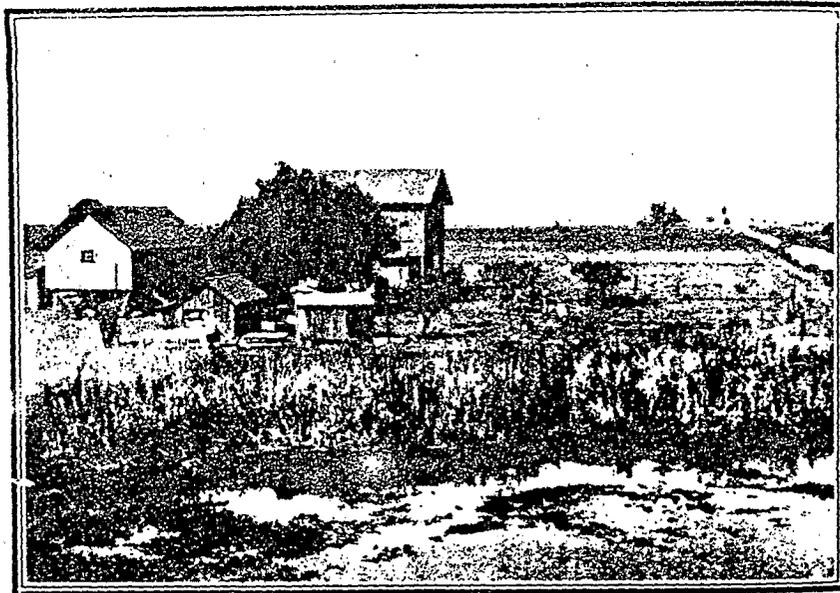
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The promotional campaign conveniently overlooked some of the hazards associated with land ownership in the Delta. The insecurity of the levees was probably the major difficulty. As recently as 1907, a flood had topped almost every levee in the Delta, and in 1938, flood waters inundated Venice Island and Franks Tract, forcing the complete abandonment of the latter island. The problems of levee maintenance were made worse by the subsidence of the reclaimed islands. The land level can sink an inch or two a year as a result of oxidation of the organic soils, compaction, wind erosion or burning. (SWRCB Draft EIR, III - 125). The fact that land elevations in the Delta islands are often significantly below mean sea level contributes to increased seepage control and drainage costs as well as to the expense of maintaining and strengthening the levees.

The peat islands were susceptible to damage not only from floods, but fires, because the organic soil itself could burn. During the summer of 1934, the barley crop on Webb Tract caught fire, burning with such intensity that paint peeled from the farm equipment, and sacks of burning grain glowed red like coals. Fire swept across the island, igniting fuel tanks and destroying sheds. The fire was extinguished by quick thinking on the part of the island superintendent, who ordered that twelve cuts be made in the levee to flood the island. This stopped the fire and extinguished the peat that otherwise might have burned to a considerable depth. (Fallman interview; McIntosh interview).

Even with the peat intact, the Delta soil was not an inexhaustible resource. The islands could be overworked and soil diseases could impair some crops; potatoes, for example, grew well in virgin soil, but after a few years often fell victim to disease. Empire Tract became so "sour and overworked" that it was subjected to controlled flooding in 1929 in an attempt, apparently successful, to restore its fertility. (Fallman interview)

California Delta Farms sales campaign in 1919-20 managed to promptly dispose of the tracts offered for sale. In the first year of this campaign, over \$7,000,000 in Delta lands were sold, and by June, 1920, newspapers reported that California Delta Farms had only nineteen farms remaining. (San Francisco Examiner, June 5, 1920; San Francisco Bulletin, June 26, 1920). A large number of its subdivisions passed into the hands of farmers in small tracts of 80 acres and up, but much of the company's advertising was an attempt to attract "investors" who might "rent . . . this rich land at a high figure" to tenants. (Stockton Daily Independent, May 11, 1919; Stockton Record, May 3, 1919). Arthur C. Parsons, exclusive land agent for California Delta Farms, heavily publicized the "important sale" of 240 acres on the Orwood Tract to B. F. Walker, a Stockton physician. His success, Parsons hoped, would entice "buyers in various lines of business and the professions" to "grow proportionally in number with the farmers." (Stockton Independent, May 11, 1919).



SCENE ON THE CAMPS OF THE DR. B. F. WALKER ACREAGE ON THE ORWOOD TRACT IN THE CONTRA COSTA DELTA

(Byron Times Eighth Booster Edition,
1922-23)

The sale of California Delta Farms lands coincided closely with the passage of the anti-alien land legislation of 1920 that severely restricted Asians from owning or leasing land. Linked both to the subdivision and sale of lands and the new restrictions placed on aliens was a movement for "a white Delta." The impulse to remove Asians from the Delta has received little or no formal study, but anti-Japanese sentiment was commonplace after 1919. In an article on the Delta land sales program, the Byron Times noted that the "highest state of development" would come to the peat lands when the large tracts were held in small holdings farmed by the landowner himself. "But", the article continued,

". . .the best story of all is yet to come. When the Orientals have been succeeded by the white race, and the families of Americans are assisting in the work of production, then will come the returns to swell the accounts of those who had faith and a purpose in delving into the soil for the great riches that lie beneath the peat." (Byron Times, April 18, 1919).

In another article, the Old River Farms Company, which was considering subdivision of its property, noted the advantages in creating "a country farmed and owned by WHITE PEOPLE -- the real dream of Delta land owners." (Byron Times Seventh Booster Edition, 1920-1921, p. 202).

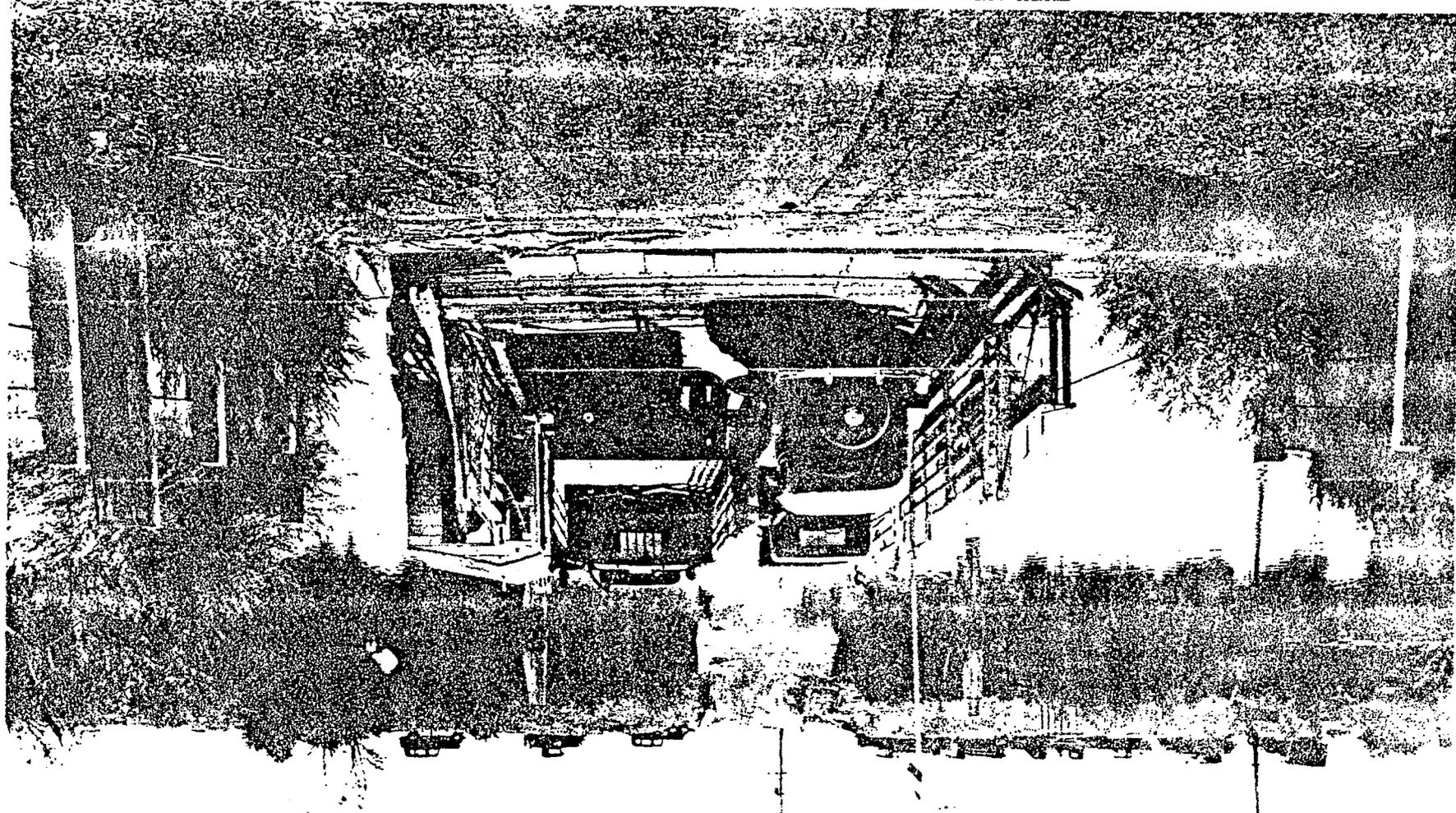
Development of good overland transportation routes through the Delta was also closely connected to California Delta Farms' land sales and the desire to settle "Americans" on Delta farm lands. Until the early years of the 1920's, county road development in the Delta was not deemed justified because of the lack of permanent farmers on the islands. As a result of California Delta Farms' selling campaign, many white families were settled on Holland Tract by 1922. In that year, the residents petitioned the County Supervisors for the construction of a trestle bridge connecting Holland Tract to the mainland. Local newspapers reported that the county and California Delta Farms planned to jointly finance the construction of ferries connecting Holland, Franks, and Webb tracts. (Byron Times, May 26, 1922). The impact of improved transportation on Delta settlement patterns was noted by John P. Irish, one-time defender of Asian immigration and a Franks Tract resident: "The coming of good roads and bridges and American families into the Delta of Contra Costa and San Joaquin is going to spell another chapter in the campaign to 'make the Delta white'." (Byron Times, April 28, 1922).

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WITH ONLY A FERRYBOAT TO CARE FOR THE HEAVY DELTA TRAFFIC!

Scene on Old River, at the Clifton Ferry Crossing, between the Great Union Island and Clifton Court Districts. Building of a bridge connecting these rich Delta sections will mean the placing of thousands of the most fertile acres in Central California in an advantageous position. Here lies a principalty that can and will be made into the mightiest of vegetable kingdoms, but little progress can be made with only a ferryboat to depend upon. Won't the Supervisors of Contra Costa and San Joaquin counties and the city of Stockton and land owners as well get together and change the picture?

---Remarkable photograph by the Logan Studios of Stockton, taken expressly for the Development Edition of the "Byron Times."

California Delta Farms' success in profitably disposing of its lands was short-lived. By 1921 an agricultural depression had spread across California that would continue for years. The purchasers of California Delta Farms' real estate defaulted in their payments and the company was forced to foreclose, leaving it with thousands of acres to operate once more. California Delta Farms was again forced to find tenants to operate its islands, but now the movement for Asian exclusion backfired by depriving the company of its best potential tenants. The shortage of suitable tenants was noted by Jesse V. Mendenhall, newly appointed president of California Delta Farms, in his 1921 annual report to stockholders. He expressed the hope that a recently established government agricultural training school on Rough and Ready Island would train ex-soldiers to "replace our alien tenants." (Byron Times, February 3, 1922). Although it is impossible to say at this time what impact this training facility had on alleviating Delta labor shortages, the school hoped to graduate 500 trained agriculturalists in each of the ensuing five years. (Byron Times, February 3, 1922).

C. I. D. Moore, author of a biography of George Cochran, wrote in 1935 that the alien land laws were responsible for many of the problems encountered by Delta companies after 1920.

"This reclamation achievement at first and for several years was very profitable for everyone who had invested in it. The land was leased to Japanese tenants and produced heavy crops. Then came the California Alien Land Laws in 1920, which made it impossible for Japanese and other aliens to own or lease land in this State. This deprived these Delta companies of their tenants and gave them a set-back from which they have not thus far recovered. Then followed the unfavorable market conditions that have existed throughout much of the intervening years. While the lands are now leased and being cultivated, the high degree of prosperity that existed under Japanese tenancy has not yet returned." (Moore, pp. 171-172).

California Delta Farms' annual report described 1921 as the company's "most difficult period." It received only \$22,876 in rents, while \$13,414 in uncollected rents "had to be written off," and company officials complained that their discouraging situation "will be unavoidable until farming and financial conditions improve." (San Francisco Call, January 30, 1922). The prolonged agricultural depression and the impact of the alien land laws forced California Delta Farms to remain in agricultural management until the late 1930's and into the 1940's.

In the wake of the setback to California Delta Farms' planned liquidation of its holdings, Lee A. Phillips resigned the

presidency of the company. Although he remained active on its Board of Directors, Phillips, a powerful Los Angeles financier, was unwilling to run the mundane, day-to-day affairs of what had become a large-scale land leasing business. (Los Angeles Times, September 21, 1921; Byron Times, October 14, 1921; McIntosh interview). The new president was Jesse V. Mendenhall, who was also president of the Holland Land and Water Company, another of the corporations dominated by Los Angeles financial interests. (San Francisco Chronicle, November 11, 1921). Mendenhall's headquarters were to be in Stockton, and the Byron Times noted that he "is not only conversant with all local Delta conditions, but he is here on the ground, and will devote his time to the direct administration of the company's interests, from its headquarters in Stockton." (Byron Times, October 14, 1921). This shift in management seems to indicate that the company realized that it was now forced to actively manage its property, rather than merely sell it at a good profit. For the next ten years the company primarily leased land to tenants, a 1927 advertisement in the Byron Times Tenth Development Edition proclaiming that "Now you can rent this fertile land!" (Byron Times Tenth Development Edition, 1926-1927, p. 191).

Despite being forced to return to active management and leasing of their lands, large companies such as California Delta Farms remained interested in selling the lands that they controlled. John J. McIntosh noted that the companies' main function was to sell "real estate -- they only rented the land until they could find somebody to buy it." (McIntosh interview). Mendenhall wrote in an article entitled "The Delta -- A Challenge to Action", that "now that the non-homeseking Oriental is departing," the Delta must be opened for immigrants from the eastern states. "Following the completion of major development programs of the big colonization projects, success to the new host of incoming farmers will be brought within reach through right prices, liberal terms and expert farming advice . . . and other questions that are of vital concern to the newcomer's sustained welfare." He also defended the role of the large reclamation companies, stating that reclamation was the result of "the daring investment of millions of outside capital." (Byron Times Ninth Development Edition, 1924-1925 p. 184).

In 1930, Lee Phillips set up another corporation, Productive Properties, Ltd., which acquired islands from California Delta Farms through the purchase of California Delta Farms reclamation bonds that were in default after 1928. Phillips bought the bonds that had a face value of from \$100 to \$1,000 a piece for amounts that varied from par down to a mere \$5.00 each. The bonds were then converted into stock in the new company. As a result of these financial machinations, California Delta Farms was left in 1935 with only King Island and Bishop Tract, while Productive Properties, Ltd., controlled 18,000 acres, including Webb, Orwood and Holland tracts. Phillips also held property under the name

of Lee Phillips, Incorporated. (Fallman interview; McIntosh interview; Articles of Incorporation, Productive Properties Ltd.). In August 1937, Productive Properties reduced its capital stock from \$2,400,000 to \$370,000 by retiring stock in exchange for land; one share of stock being traded for one acre of land. A major beneficiary was Phillips himself, because he held a large amount of stock. (Articles of Incorporation, Productive Properties Ltd.; Fallman interview). By October, 1938, several months after Lee Phillips' death, California Delta Farms was in control of Productive Properties, the combined organization still having 22,000 acres of land; 15,000 in the name of Productive Properties. (Rural Observer, September/October, 1938, pp. 10-11). During the next ten years the two companies sold their Delta holdings, legally dissolving both concerns in 1948. (Articles of Incorporation, California Delta Farms, Productive Properties; McIntosh interview).

The dissolution of the greatest of the Twentieth Century reclamation companies brought to a close the era of Delta reclamation. Small holdings that existed in the 1850's and the 1860's had been consolidated by financial investors interested in the improvement and resale of Delta acreage. The Nineteenth Century entrepreneurs' greatest successes came in the reclamation of lands on the fringes of the peat lands in the heart of the Delta, leaving to Twentieth Century investors the final task of reclaiming the swamp lands. While the pattern of corporate reclamation, risking substantial capital in the hope of profitable land sales, required the ownership of huge acreages during the actual reclamation process, the intention to sell land rather than retain it after reclamation that marked many of the enterprises from the Tide Lands Reclamation Company to Productive Properties, Ltd., guaranteed the restoration of smaller land holdings. Subdivision and sale has resulted in the land ownership pattern evident today of sizes ranging from a few hundred acres to whole islands, some still farmed on lease arrangements. The era of reclamation has passed, but its marks on the land and the economy of the Delta region remain indelible.

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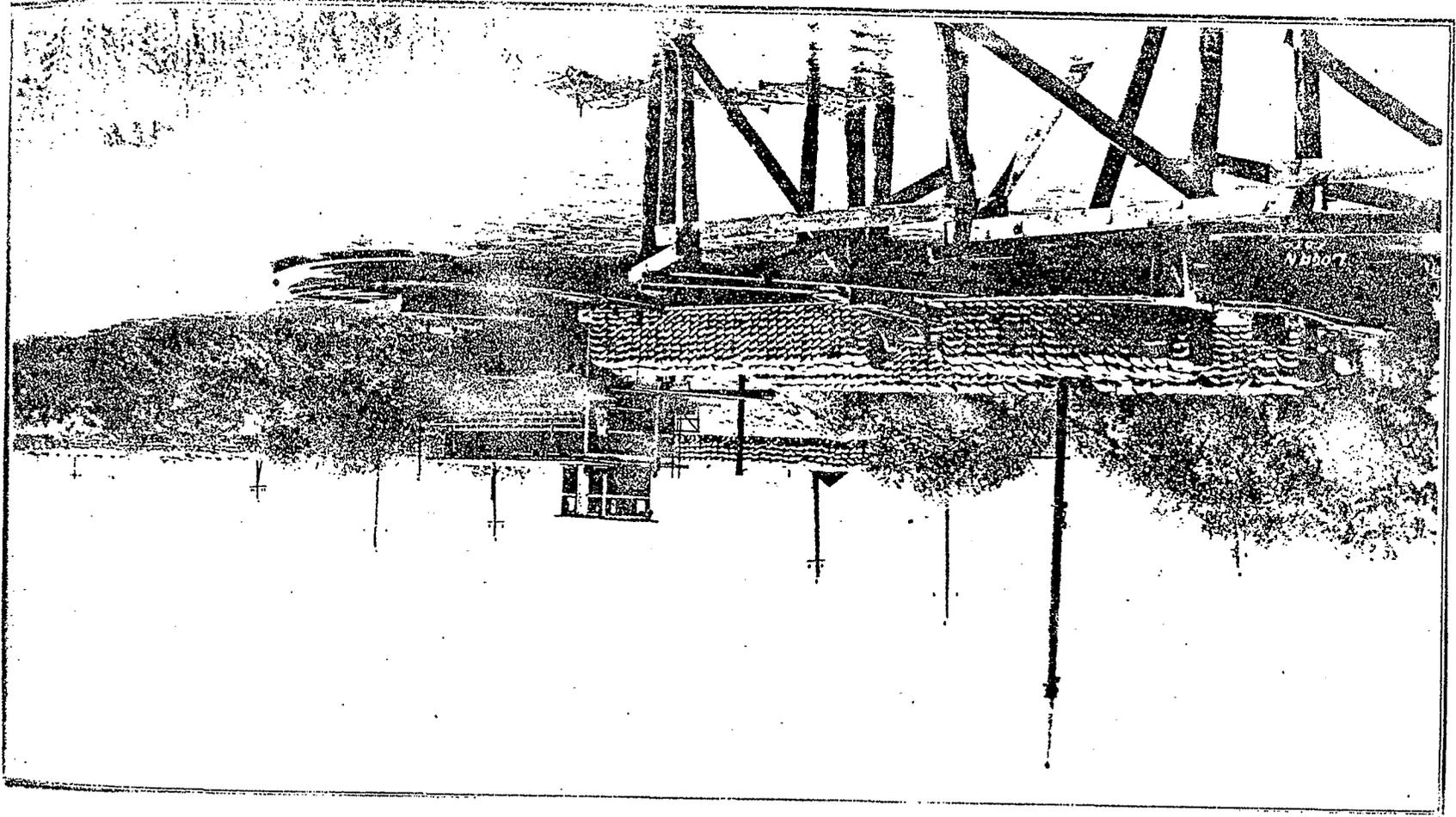
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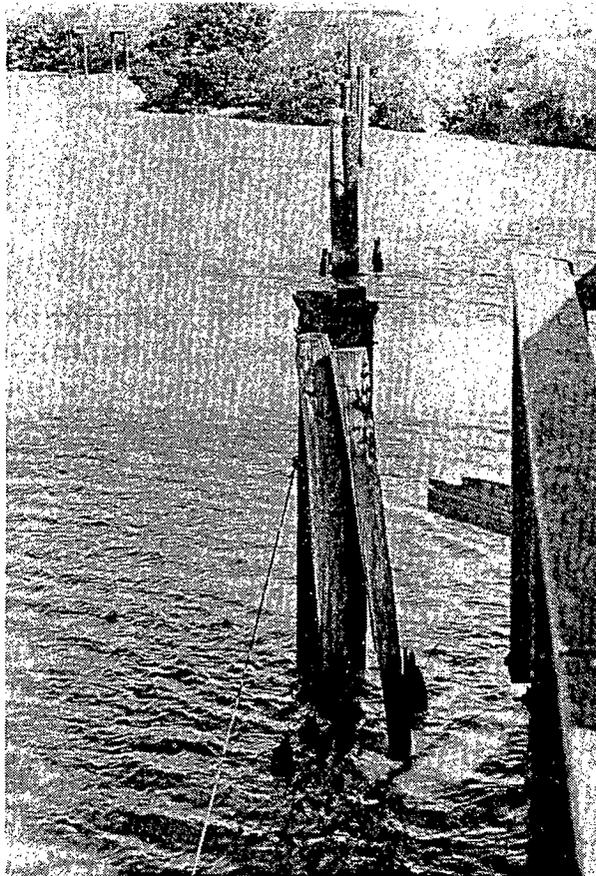
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(Byron Times Seventh Booster Edition, 1920-21, p. 142)

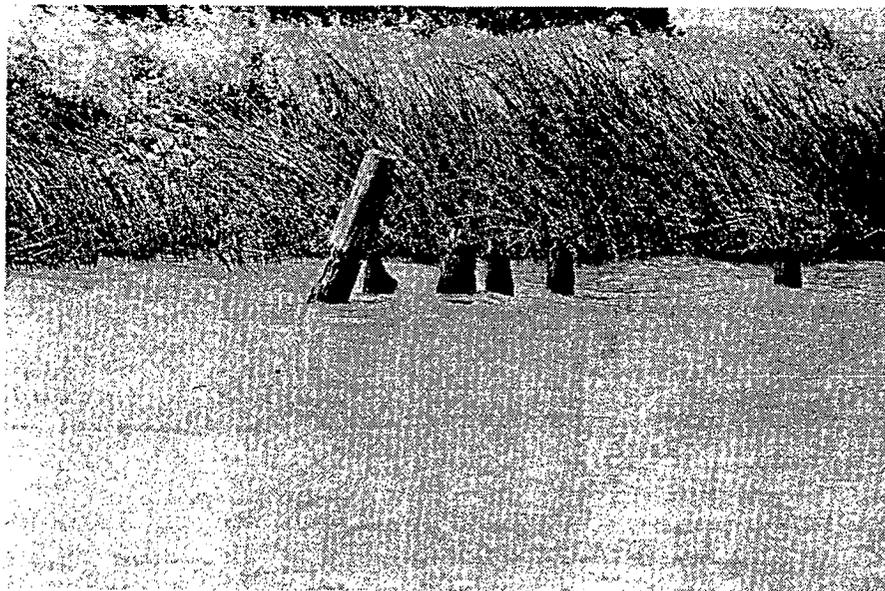
ISLAND TRANSPORTATION COMPANY'S BARGE LOADED WITH BARLEY
Thousands of Sacks Are Piled Up on the Union
From a photograph by the Logan Street



C-075876



Dolphins in front of Haas Slough Beet Dump



Derelict Pilings (North Shore Bouldin Island
South Fork of the Mokelumne River)
Derelict Pilings are Common in the Delta



From viewing the remains of landings throughout the project area some rather speculative generalizations can be made. Blueprints or plans for landings are apparently non-existent, suggesting that they were relatively simple and routinely constructed, the details being considered common knowledge by those concerned. Some islands had remarkably well-built landings; Tony Busalacci recalled the Victoria Island had sturdy landings and our own observations indicate that McDonald Island's Twentieth Century structures were solidly made. A typical landing had a small pier or floating dock for passenger and light freight movement. Stronger pilings, perhaps in a row, extended along the levee bank to be used in securing barges or large boats for gang-plank loading and unloading of crops, seed, machinery or other bulky cargo. Variations on this typical design might range all the way from a complete absence of dockage pilings where a steamer or tug would simply nose into a cleared area on the levee and secure its lines to nearby trees or perhaps deadmen (cables attached to logs buried in the levee) to the installation of bulkheads or dolphins (tight clusters of pilings bound together at the top) for the safe mooring of large vessels. Few places in the Delta had wharf facilities similar to those found in ports; rather the use of the gang-plank was the rule in cargo handling. The design and construction of landings depended primarily on the owner of the adjacent land and perhaps on the anticipated volume and type of traffic. It would appear that there was little change in landing design over the years, with those of earlier vintage being substantially the same as more modern ones and similar to some dockages still in occasional use.

2. Sugar Beet Dumps

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, the cultivation of sugar beets spread throughout large sections of the Delta. The beets were not handled in bags or boxes as onions, potatoes, asparagus, celery or even grain had been but in bulk on barges. The barges were loaded at what was termed a "beet dump", which consisted of a hopper into which beets were unloaded from farm trucks or wagons and a conveyor belt extending out over the water. Barges were then moored under the conveyor and the beets dumped into them. In contrast to camp landings, beet dumps are well documented since their installation required a permit from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the filing of plans. Corps permit files indicate that most beet dumps were installed by the sugar refining companies rather than the landowners or growers.

Beet dumps were among the best constructed structures on the waterways. Heavy pilings supported the conveyor machinery at the outer edge of the levee and substantial dolphins were placed on either side for the mooring of barges. Other piles nearby were used to moor barges waiting their turn at the conveyor or those already filled waiting for a tug. For comments on a surviving beet dump, see the list of specific historic resources below.

Barges at Beet Dump on King Island, 1929

"Byron Times Twelfth Development Edition"

BARGE OF THE ERIKSON NAVIGATION COMPANY AT THE KING ISLAND LANDING
Being loaded with sugar beets from the Al Westgate acreage for the Holly Sugar Company's factory at Tracy. Barges Nos. 3 and 5 are shown in the picture, which was taken October 11, 1929. The beets can be seen dropping from the onboard conveyor. They are partially cleaned in the process of passing from wagon to barge. One of the sights of the Delta are these great barges, loaded to the top, being towed up stream to Tracy. The Erikson Company transports thousands of tons of products from the "Island" country each year.
—Beautiful Photograph by the Logan Studio of Stockton, Taken Expressly for the Twelfth Development Edition of the "Byron Times"



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3. Structural Support Pilings

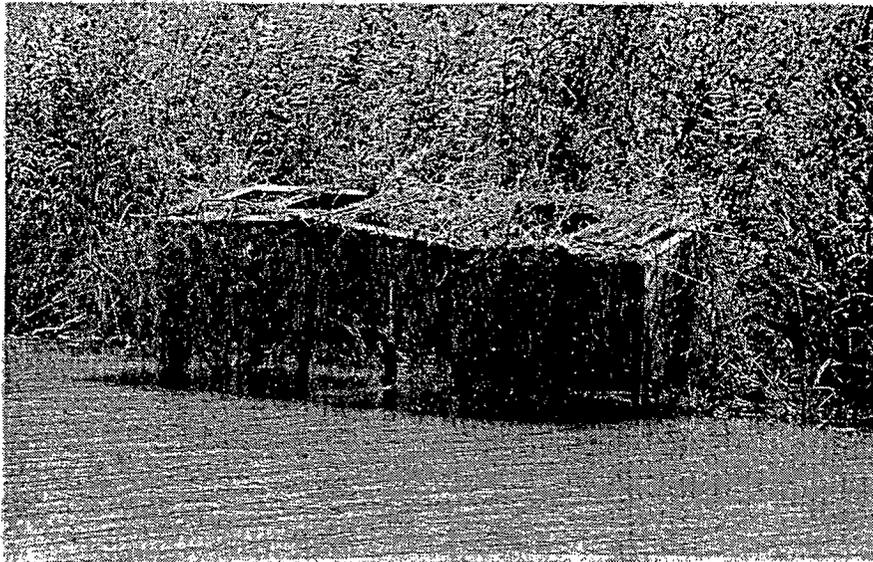
Warehouses, canneries and other structures, probably most commonly packing or processing sheds at camps, were at times built on the water side of the levees, extending at least partially out over the water. These structures rested on pilings. Identification of these pilings can be difficult if no structural remains exist since the derelict pilings might resemble the remains of a landing. Documentary evidence provides the only reasonable verification if such evidence is sufficiently detailed and specific.

4. Fishing Camps

Until 1933, commercial market fishing was permitted in Delta waters, with catfish, striped bass and salmon being taken for sale. The fishermen often lived on small islands or berms that had been by-passed by the reclamation process. Their camps were lightly-built residences and their piers or floating docks were also light and generally simply constructed.

5. Recreational Facilities

The Delta marshes have always attracted hunters and fishermen although market hunting and commercial fishing predominated into the Twentieth Century. The years since World War II have seen a vast increase in leisure time with the recreational use of the waterways by boaters, waterskiers, fishermen and hunters increasing. For the most part, these activities have resulted in such "artifacts" as lightly-built docks, duckblinds or even floating cabins. Marinas, however, do use substantial pilings in construction of slips and docks. Most such facilities are still in use, but occasionally one like "Ben's Marina" on Old River has been destroyed, leaving only the pilings as evidence of its existence.



Derelict Duck Blind, Old River

6. Power Line Supports

Overhead power lines built through the Delta have had to be kept far enough above the channels to allow the passage of boats. Prior to the installation of modern steel structures, tall wooden poles were used, supported around the base of pilings. Pilings also held guy wires for additional support.

7. Siphon or Pump Guards

Drainage and irrigation of Delta tracts requires a complex water management system keyed to the use of drainage pumps and siphons. Pipes from these facilities extend over or through the levees into the waterways near the levees. Such pipes are, and have been, flanked by pilings as protection from damage by boats navigating close to shore. At times major pump stations served much as did camps as a focus of activity in the shipment of crops or as stops on steamer or motor launch itineraries.

8. Levee Reinforcement or Repair

A major use of pilings has been in the reclamation process. H. D. Bacon tried to use pilings, with cross pieces tying them together, to hold his peat levees in place on Bacon Island. Pilings have often been driven in a single row along the levees to help reinforce potentially weak spots. In the event of a levee break, pilings in a double row might be driven across the break site and brush piled in between to trap silt and begin to plug the leak. Later a dredger would be used to make more permanent repairs.



Levee Reinforcement Pilings
Staten Island, North Fork of
Mokelumne River

On Bouldin Island near Central Landing and around Bacon Island the levee reinforcement pilings on mid-channel berms trace the original 19th Century levee line, while the present levees are located further from the natural waterways.

Levee reinforcement has been regarded as a maintenance practice and thus has not generally been documented. The exceptions are Bacon Island and the site of significant levee breaks, though even in these cases the documentation is generally sketchy. After camp landings, levee reinforcement pilings are probably the most frequently encountered historical artifacts in the study area.

9. Wing Dams

Although only one historic wing dam was encountered in the project area (Georgiana Slough), their use was common on parts of the Sacramento River System. A wing dam extends out from the bank to force flowing water to scour the main channel and thus enhance navigability. Wing dams were constructed of rock and brush held by pilings.

10. Incidental Pilings

Pilings have been driven in connection with ferry sites, bridge sites and in connection with various construction projects. At times an undocumented piling can be found in a location, such as the middle of a channel, that defies logical explanation.

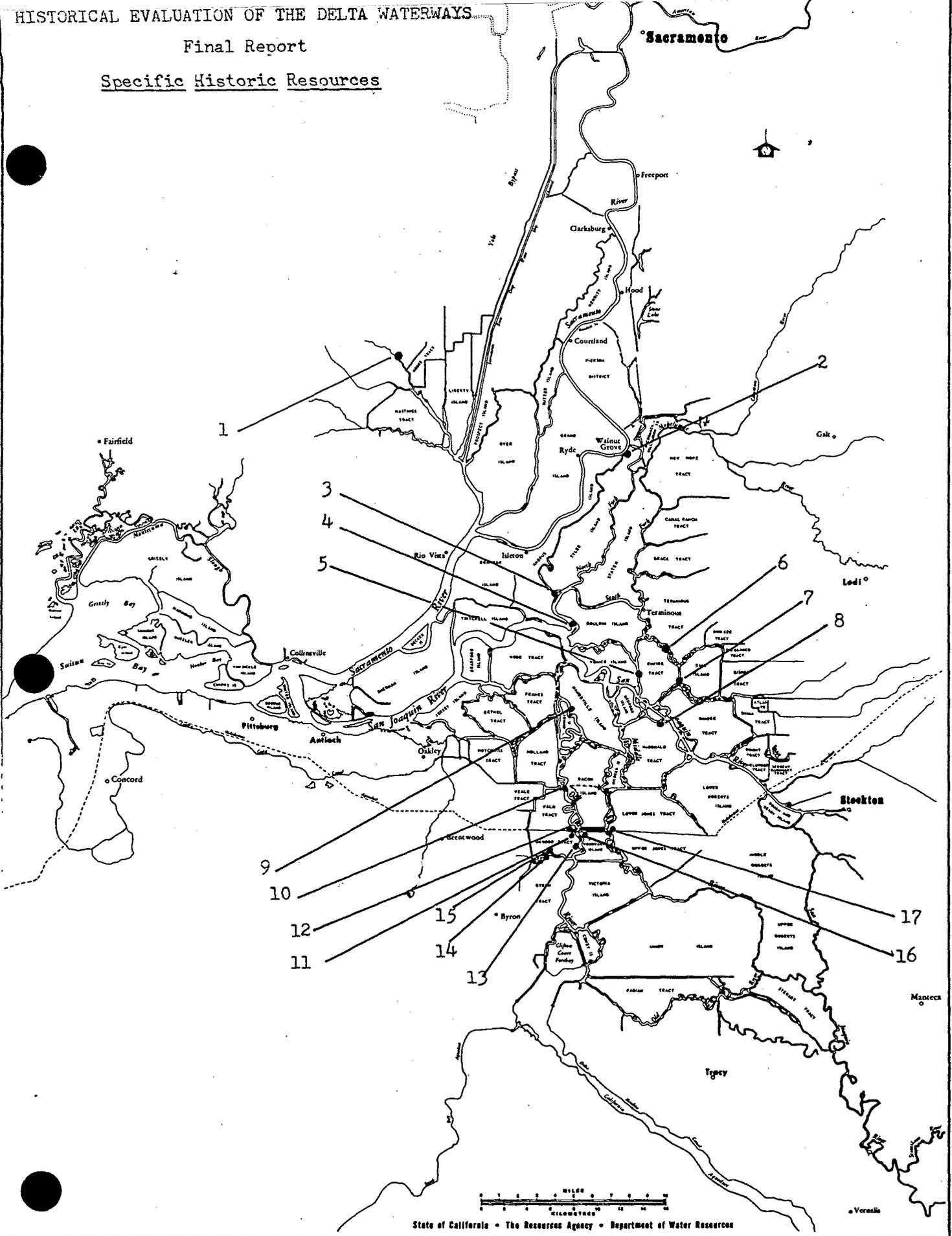
Artifacts in the Waterways: Boats and Barges

Various types of vessels - steamboats, tugs, motor launches, barges, scow schooners and more - have used the channels of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. That a number of them have been sunk in the Delta seems probable, but our inspection cruises of the study area revealed only a few boat wreck sites. A partially submerged wooden barge in Bishop Cut was deemed of relatively little historic value by the State Office of Historic Preservation due to its lack of remarkable features and advanced state of deterioration. Even more deteriorated was an unidentified wreck on the North Fork of the Mokelumne River of which only a small portion of what appears to be a hull remains. In Indian Slough adjacent to Orwood Tract, a dredger is submerged, marked by Contra Costa County as a navigation hazard.

The presence of relatively intact vessels was encouraging. Several barges along Mandeville Island apparently date from about the Second World War, including an interesting multi-story barracks barge. An old potato boat, the Mandeville, rests on McDonald Island, rotting, but substantially intact. We understand, though we have not had occasion for on-site confirmation, that several dredger hulks are moored at the southern end of Honker Cut.

Final Report

Specific Historic Resources



State of California • The Resources Agency • Department of Water Resources

The appearance of wrecked or substantially abandoned boats or barges reflects a common practice in the Delta; that of simply mooring vessels no longer needed to berms or in other out of the way places and leaving them there, eventually to sink. The use of the waterways as a graveyard of old boats has been confirmed by more than one of our informants.

Artifacts Adjacent to the Waterways

The most notable sites adjacent to the waterways will be discussed in the section on specific historic resources below. In general, they are the remains of canneries, warehouses or residences. To an extent the bridges and ferries that cross the channels are historical sites and the town of Walnut Grove, the only important community in the study area, is a site of considerable interest. Most of the camps, however, that once dotted the Delta have disappeared with the sites marked only by a few trees or perhaps a modern shed or two.

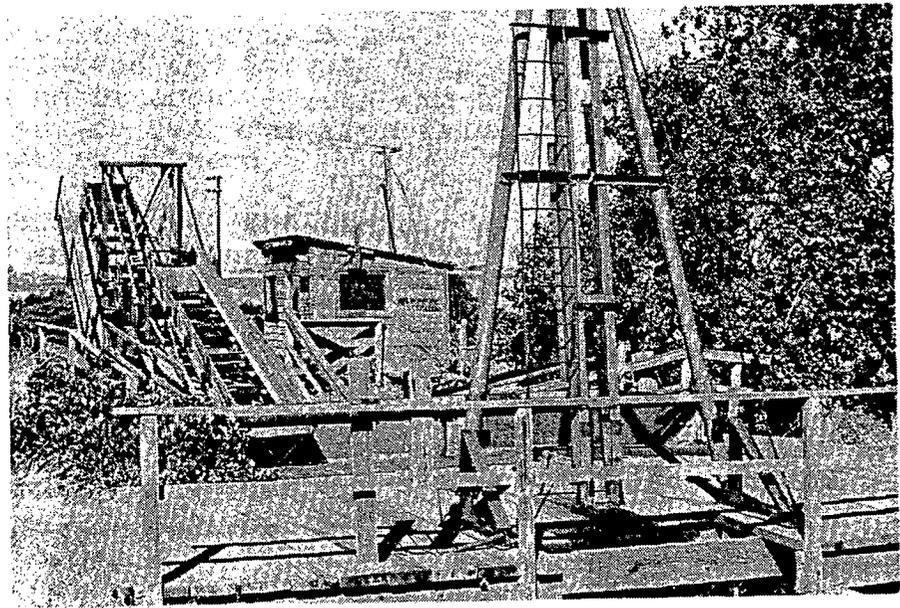
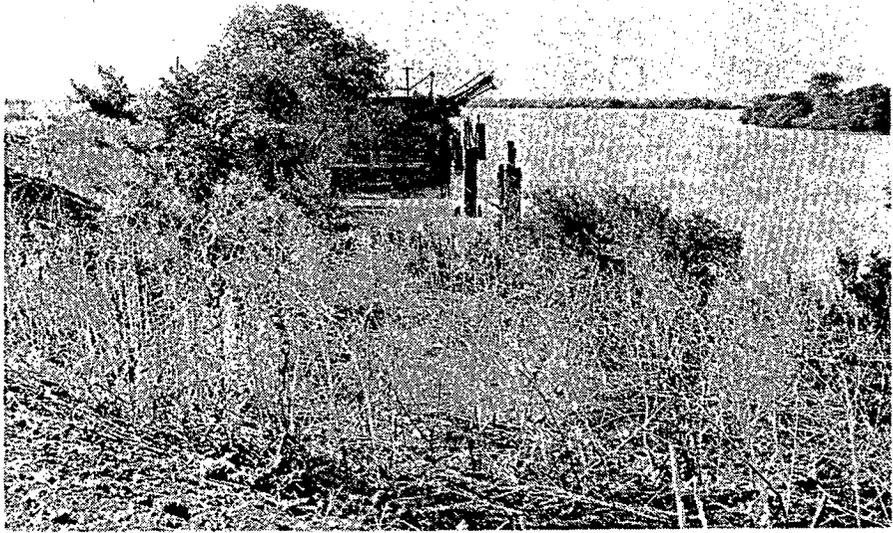
Specific Historic Resources

The sites listed below are among the most noteworthy encountered during the project. At almost all of these sites, physical remains are still in existence, although in varying degrees of deterioration. Many of these sites were not subject to disturbance by the State Lands Commission hazard removal program. Further information can be found in the "site specific" reports submitted to the State Lands Commission and the site descriptions and evaluations contained in those reports should be considered an appendix to this report.

The numbers attached to each of the sites listed below correspond to the numbers found on the map of "Specific Historic Resources."

1. Haas Slough Beet Dump

The only intact sugar beet loading dump that we have found is located on private property along Haas Slough in Solano County outside the study area. Its machinery and all appurtenant pilings remain in position and its owner is considering measures to preserve it.



Haas Slough Beet Dump

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2. Walnut Grove.

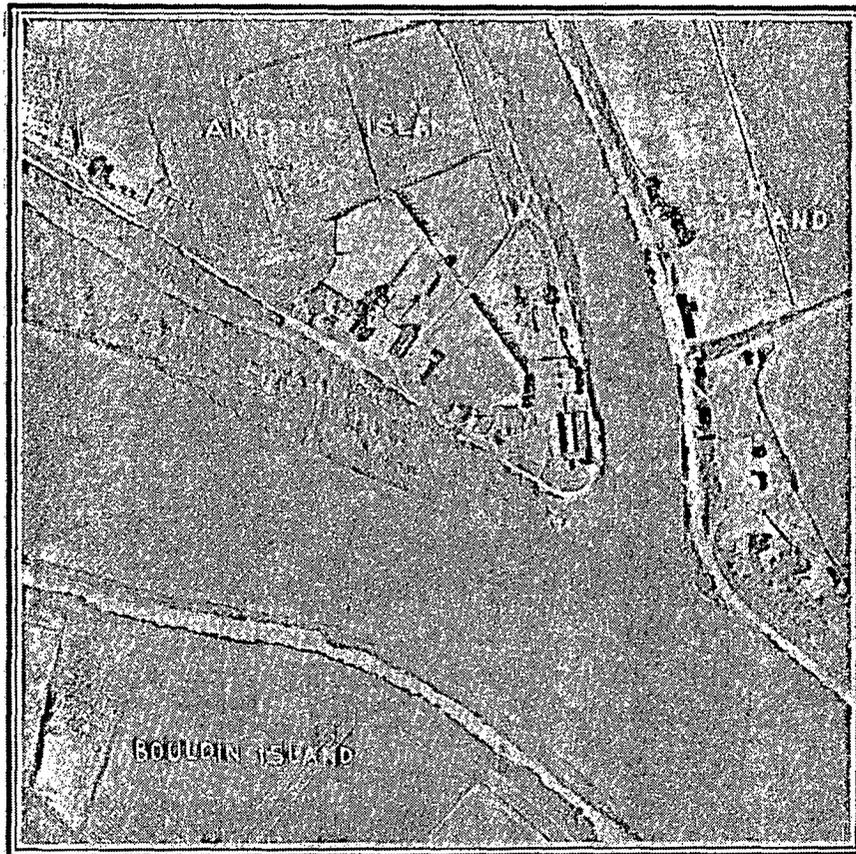
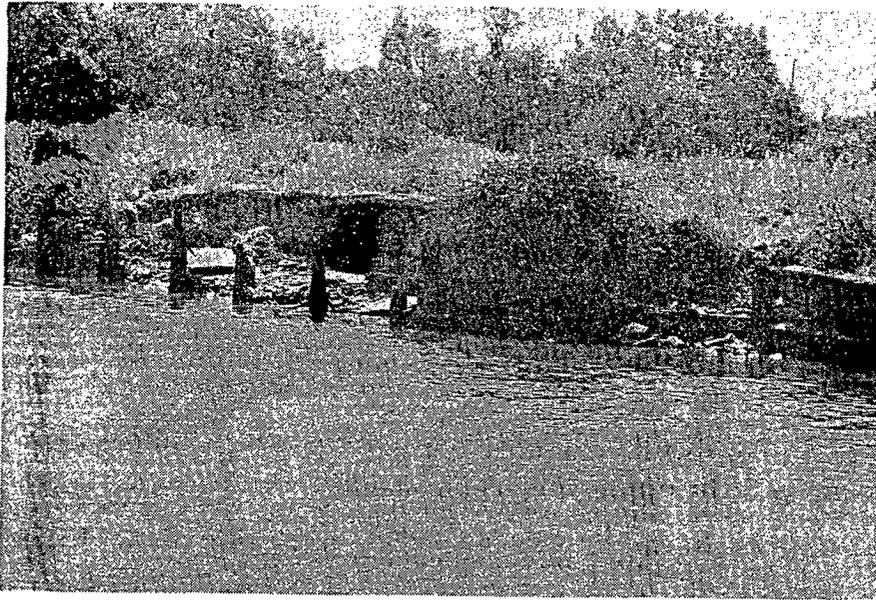
The only important community in the study area is Walnut Grove, located on the Sacramento River at the head of Georgiana Slough. The town owes its start to John Wesley Sharp who arrived in the vicinity in 1850 or 1851 and eventually established the first hotel, first store, the blacksmith shop, post office and a ferry across Georgiana Slough. By 1911, when the Sacramento Southern Railroad arrived, the town boasted a hotel, schoolhouse, hall, church, post office, bakery and butcher shop, two blacksmiths, two saloons, a lodging house and numerous houses and barns in addition to a closely packed Chinese section. When the "Chinatown" burned in 1915, some of the Chinese community relocated to the new town of Locke, just north of Walnut Grove. Walnut Grove was a major transportation center with railroad and riverboat connections and the town's leading man in the early Twentieth Century, Alex Brown, was known as a banker and an important asparagus shipper.

3. Golden State Asparagus Cannery Site

In 1908, the Golden State Asparagus Company located a cannery at the junction of Georgiana Slough and the Mokelumne River for the packing of asparagus, beans, pears and peaches, with some of the asparagus grown on the company's own acreage on Andrus Island and Sherman Island. Barges provided transportation until about 1930, when the Sacramento Southern Railroad built a spur to the area from Isleton. The date of the cannery's abandonment is unknown.

Northwest of the cannery site is a grain elevator, warehouse and dock facilities were built along the railroad by the Southern Pacific and by Holly Sugar Company in the 1930's. These wharf facilities were well-developed, having pilings and dolphins for the mooring of barges.

Little remains of either site today and the few remaining pilings were so scattered and deteriorated that they were deemed of negligible historic value and thus subject to removal.



Site of the Golden State Asparagus Cannery, on Andrus Island, at the Junction of Mokolumne River and Georgiana Slough

Golden State Asparagus Cannery

(Byron Times Tenth Booster Edition.
1926-27, p. 124)

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4. Central Landing, Bouldin Island.

Prior to 1904, a community known as Central Landing existed on the western side of Bouldin Island facing the Mokelumne River, but in that year the first of several levee breaks that would plague the island occurred at that location. Photographs of Central Landing after the break show that it had a hotel and various houses and barns and a steamboat wharf. With water depth of 75 feet at the break site, Henry Voorman, an adjacent land owner, sank derelict sailing ships loaded with rocks in an unsuccessful attempt to close the hole. Pilings were driven in a double row as a preliminary step in levee repair, but further breaks in 1906 and 1908 resulted in the abandonment of the island until Lee A. Phillips reclaimed it in 1916-1918. At that time the levee at Central Landing was relocated to the east, leaving the original levee line marked by berms and pilings in the middle of the modern-day Mokelumne River. Many of these pilings are still visible, including some that may have been part of the Central Landing dock. The site illustrates how Delta geography has been altered and realtered in progressive stages of reclamation and is a testimony to the problems involved in reclaiming the Delta islands.

5. Ditcher.

A small wooden hulled ditcher rests partially submerged on a berm north of Venice Island ferry. Ditchers resembled small dredgers but were used inside the islands to dig and maintain drainage canals that could be up to 30 feet wide. California Delta Farms had a fleet of the little craft, powered by a one-cylinder gasoline engine, that could be operated by one man. Ditchers were floated to the island where they were to work and pulled over the levee by means of slides and pulleys. Ditchers are apparently no longer used in the Delta, their work having been assigned to truck mounted equipment. The derelict ditcher might, therefore, justify some attempt at study as perhaps the last of its type.

6. Correia Ferry Site.

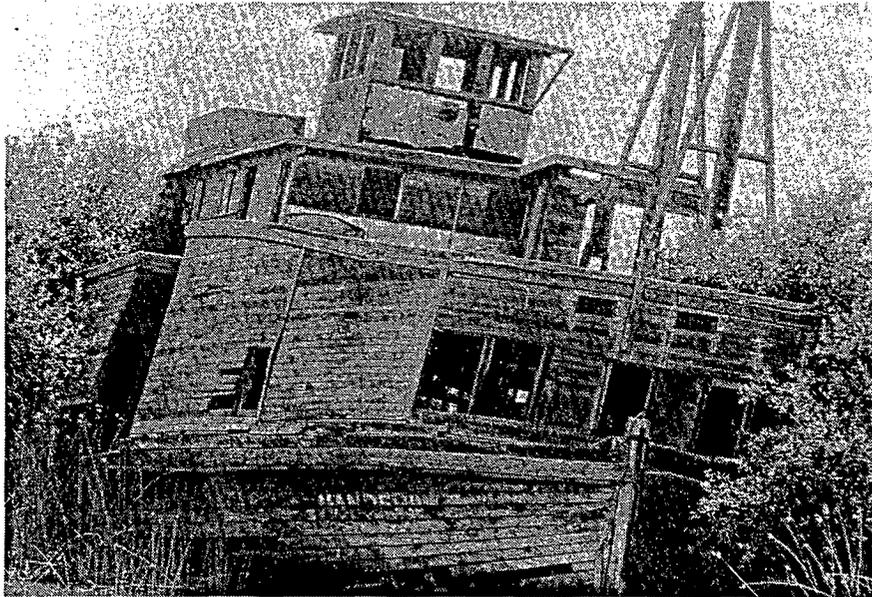
A cable-operated ferry was installed across White Slough between Empire Tract and Terminous Tract by 1935. The ferry boat is gone, but the concrete ramps remain. The adjacent house and the general surroundings make the site one of the most attractive of its type in the Delta.

7. Dredger Hulks.

We have been informed that the remains of dredgers once used by California Delta Farms can be seen in Honker Cut near Disappointment Slough, but we have had no occasion for visual inspection of the area.

8. Potato Boat Mandeville.

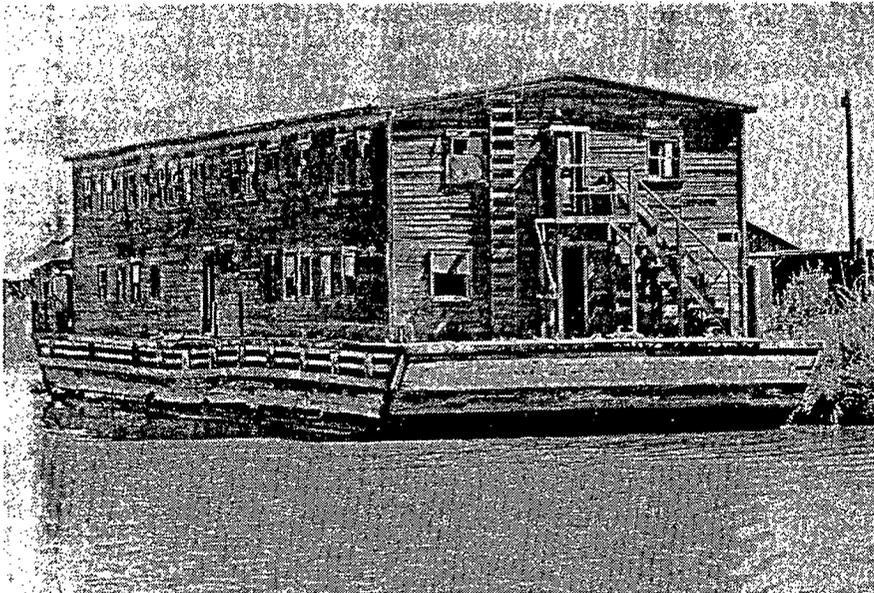
An old wooden boat bearing the name Mandeville is located on northern McDonald Island. It was built about 1917 or 1918 and was apparently christened the J. W. Higgins after her owner, a Stockton produce buyer. She was originally equipped with a gasoline engine, but was later re-equipped with two 65-horsepower Atlas diesels. An interesting feature of the boat's construction is an elevator near the bow which was used to match landing heights to facilitate the movement of cargo. The J. W. Higgins was sold to the Zuckerman family, farmers on several Delta islands and was renamed the Brothers, possibly in reference to the Zuckerman brothers. She was apparently the last of the Zuckerman fleet and may have been moved to her resting place along Headreach Cutoff just west of the Stockton Deepwater Channel sometime in the late 1950's. The inlet where she was moored has since closed so that the vessel is virtually aground. The Pioneer Museum in Stockton has some of the boat's wooden parts on display and has two photographs of her in service.



Potato Boat Mandeville on McDonald Island

9. Barracks Barge.

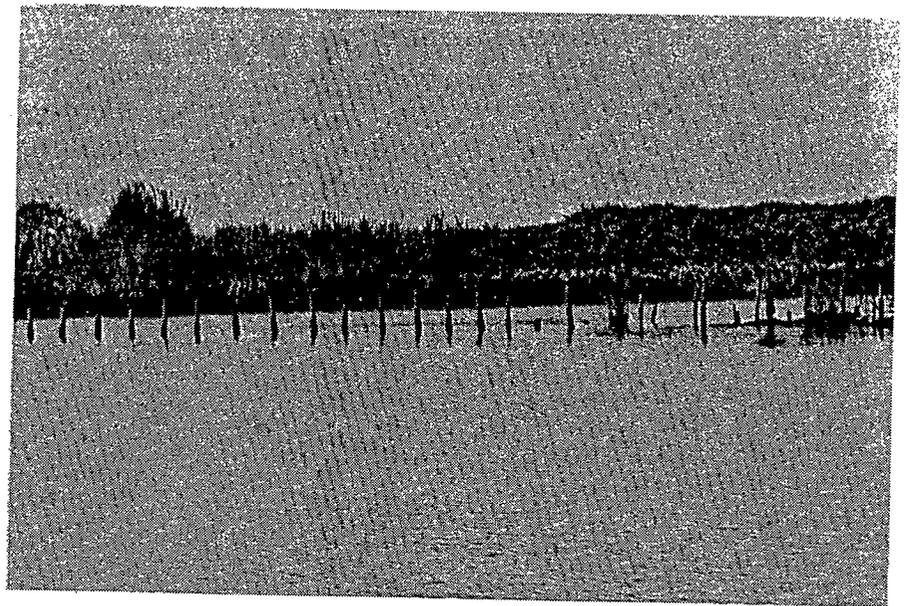
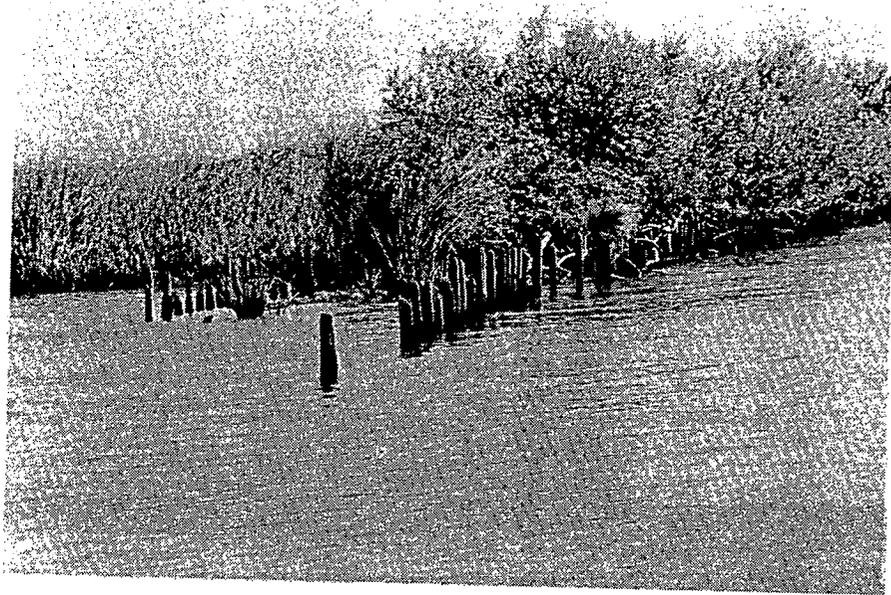
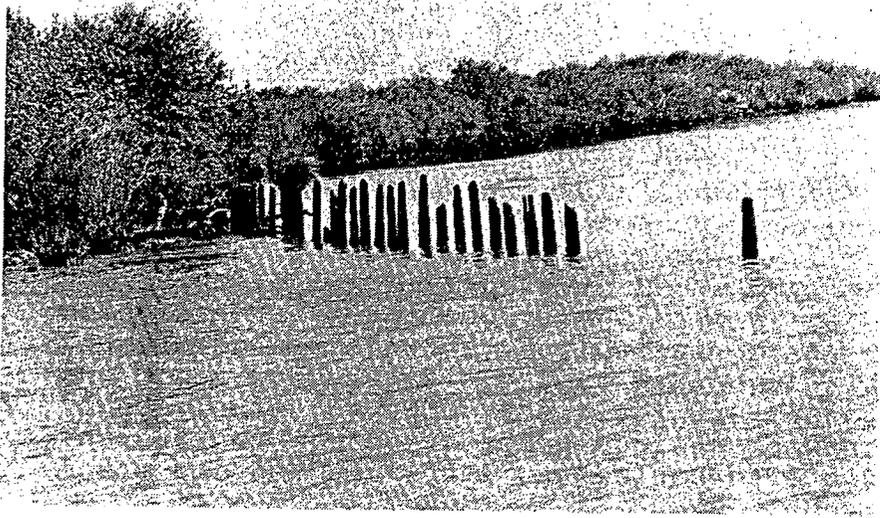
A barge with a two-story barracks structure built upon it is moored at Mandeville Island. The unusual-looking ark probably dates from the 1940's and is the only one of its type we have seen, suggesting that the housing of laborers on barges rather than in camps was a rather rare practice. Although the barge has been unused recently and is, therefore, deteriorating, its basic structure appears sound.



Barracks Barge, Old River, Mandeville Island

10. Bacon Island Levee Reinforcement Pilings.

At several sites on both the Old River and Middle River frontages of Bacon Island, light pilings in rows can be seen on mid-channel berms. There were levee reinforcement pilings driven about 1873-1874 by H. D. Bacon in an unsuccessful effort to hold his islands peat levees in place. Reclamation by California Delta Farms in 1913, relocated the levee inland from the original line, leaving the pilings on the berms. Additional detail on Bacon Island can be found in the historical narrative portion of this report. As a Central Landing, the Bacon Island pilings illustrate the problems of reclamation and the manner in which the Delta's geography has been modified.



"Chinese" Piling on Berm
Middle River, Bacon Island

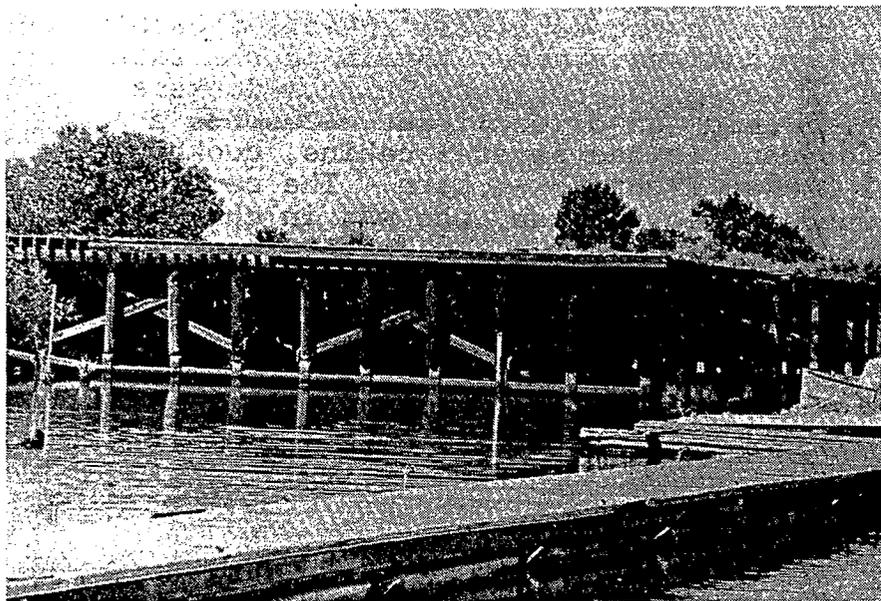
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11. Hickmott Cannery, Orwood Tract

Lee Phillips convinced Robert Hickmott to move his asparagus canning operation to Orwood Tract in 1919 from Bouldin Island, which had been flooded. Machinery was moved in on barges to the northeast corner of Orwood Tract where the cannery was erected largely on the levee. The steam plant was installed on pilings over the water, while two warehouses were constructed on the island side of the levee. The original foundation was of wood, but George Shima, who later took over the plant for use as a potato warehouse, laid new concrete foundations. By 1930, the plant had ceased operation. The foundations, potato loading chutes and wharf structures remain today but the buildings themselves have disappeared.



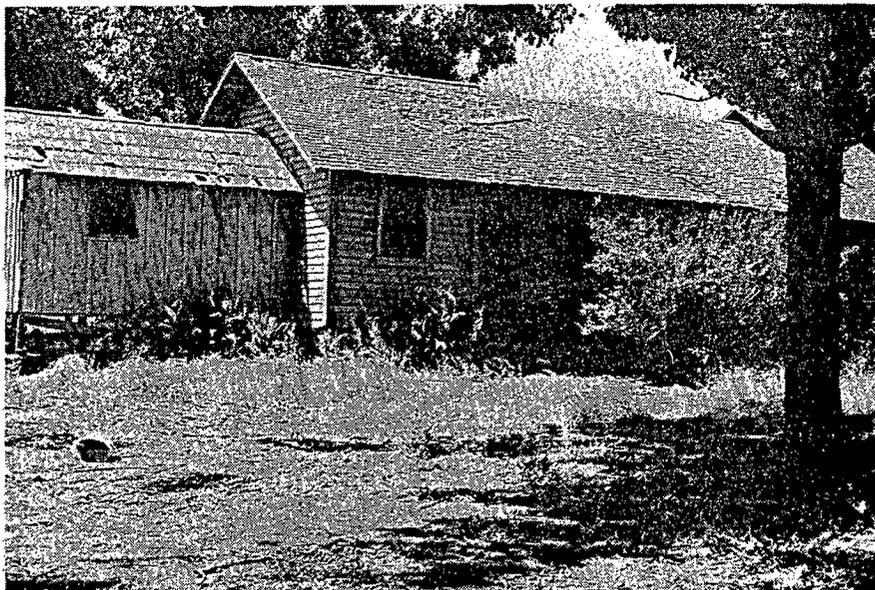
Orwood Cannery Site, Orwood Tract, Old River

12. Thousand-Foot Wharf.

Portions of a 1,000 foot long wharf survive at southeastern Palm Tract near where the Santa Fe Railway crosses Old River at a site opposite the Hickmott Cannery on Orwood Tract. The wharf once supported a railroad spur and was used to facilitate the transfer of cargoes from barges to railroad cars.

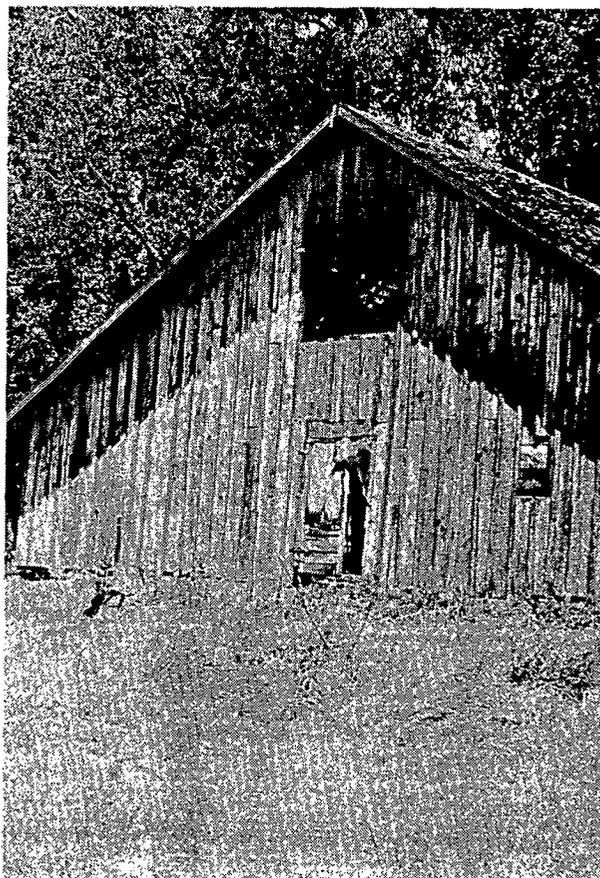
13. Orwood Labor Camp.

Camp No. 6, one of a dozen labor camps on Orwood Tract built by Lee Phillips, is still substantially intact; the only such camp we have found in the study area. Built in the late 1920's or early 1930's it housed up to sixty Chinese workers and was the main "Chinese camp" on Orwood Tract. Besides a two-story home for a foreman, it had several cabins, cookhouse, bathhouse, dining hall and an eight-horse barn. The camp is on private property owned by Leo Fallman, who was in charge of the camp during its operation.



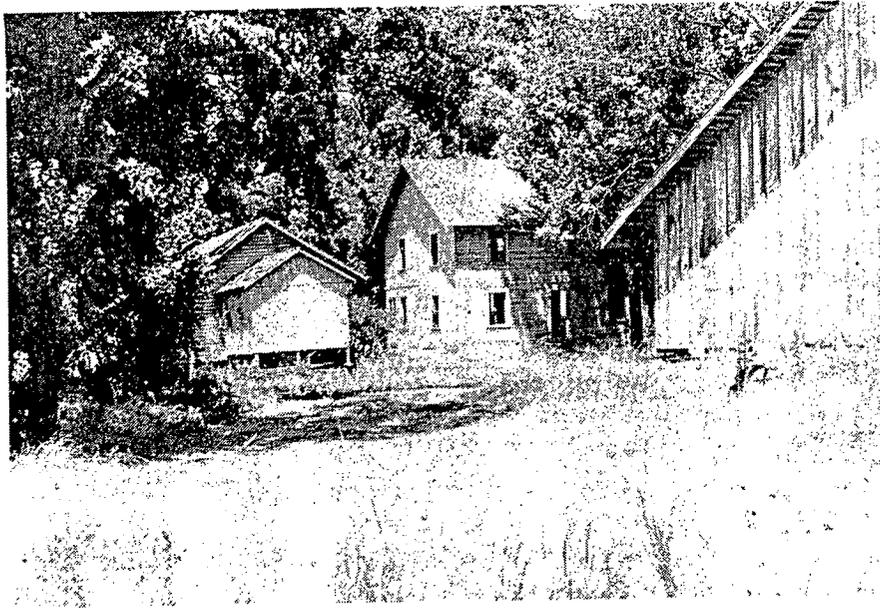
Cookhouse - Mess Hall

Orwood Camp No. 6
Cookhouse and Barn
Orwood Tract



Barn

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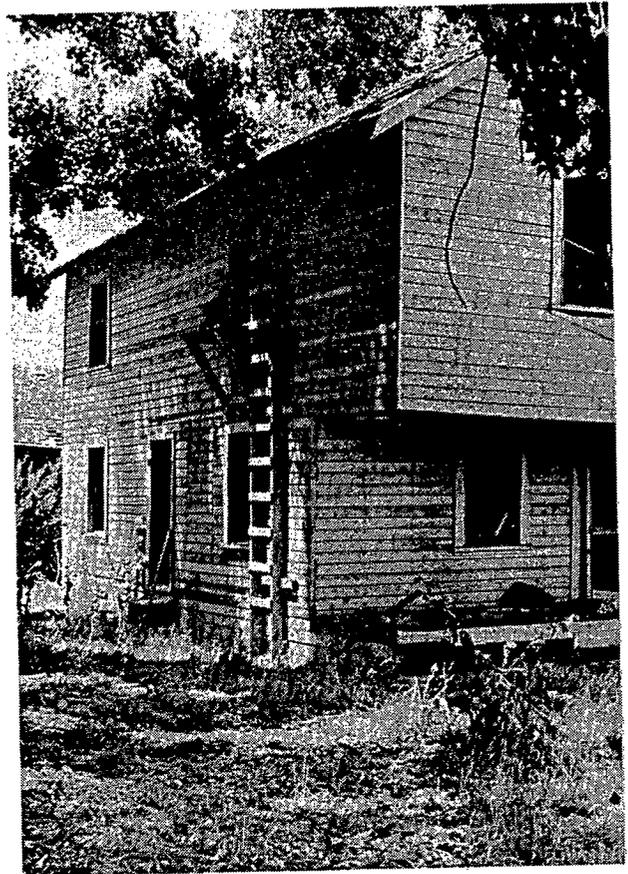


Cookhouse

Bunkhouse

Barn

Orwood Camp No. 6



Bunkhouse

14. St. Mary's Bay Tramway.

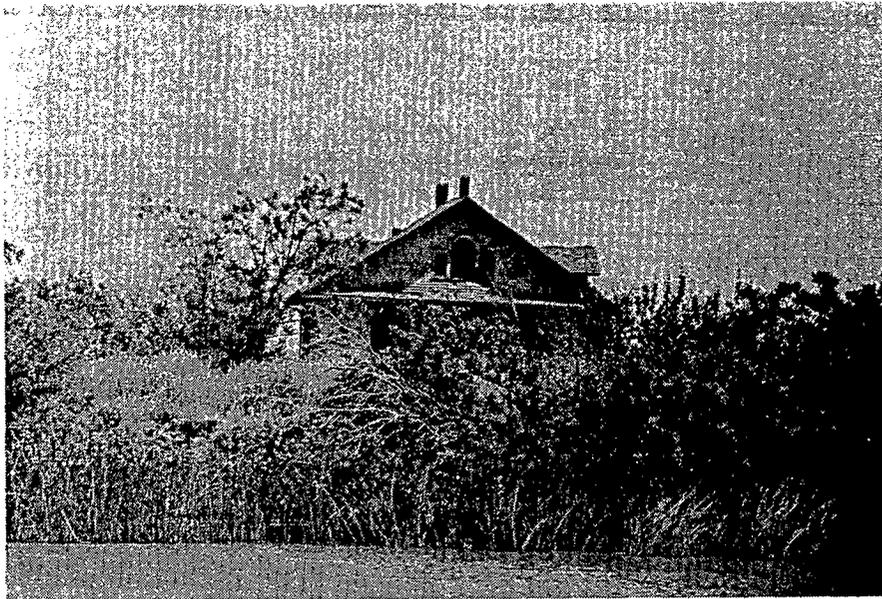
About 1870, a tramway was built in Indian Slough to carry hay from higher ground to the west to St. Mary's Bay where it could be reloaded onto scow schooners for a trip to San Francisco that took up to seven days. Mules pulled the cars loaded with hay along the tracks. The tramway was probably in operation as long as St. Mary's Bay was the head of commercial navigation on Indian Slough. It appears that Indian Slough was navigated upstream from St. Mary's Bay in the 1880's probably rendering the tramway unnecessary. Several hundred pilings extending about half a mile along and through a berm remain today to mark the site.

15. Sunken Dredger.

An old dredger is almost totally submerged in the St. Mary's Bay section of Indian Slough adjacent to Orwood Tract. Only a few bolts can be seen above the waterline. Leo Fallman, island superintendent for California Delta Farms and a long-time Orwood resident, reports that it sank between 1900 and 1910, but he does not know its name or any further details.

16. Woodward Island Headquarters.

On the northwest corner of Woodward Island, the large house once used as island headquarters is abandoned and slowly deteriorating. The house is an interesting structure and located near the Santa Fe Railway and the East Bay Municipal Utility District's Mokelumne River Aqueduct, thus making it a site of more than ordinary interest.



Woodward Island Headquarters, Woodward Island, Old River

17. Middle River.

A community developed at the Santa Fe Railway crossing of Middle River on the Jones Tracts in the early Twentieth Century. By 1911, 18 structures, including a school, were located at the site. A potato flour mill to process cull potatoes was established there about 1912 and a vegetable cannery followed in the mid-1920's, both built by the Rindge Land and Navigation Company. A ferry connected Lower Jones Tract and Bacon Island north of the railroad bridge. Today Middle River is marked by a large number of generally unidentifiable pilings.

CONCLUSION

The historic sites and artifacts described above were found in a project involving research in only a portion of the total Delta and even then focusing on the waterways. Much more remains to be done. On the basis of our work in this project, we can predict an equally varied array of artifacts to exist in other Delta waterways and on adjacent islands, with variations depending on the history of the particular areas. We would urge State, Federal and local governments to use every opportunity to catalog the historic resources of the Delta. The enthusiasm with which numerous people of diverse backgrounds assisted us in collecting this information testifies to a lively and widespread interest in the history of the Delta. The area should remain a fertile field of inquiry for professional and amateur historians alike who seek to appreciate the many facets of its unique regional history.

HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 2

Prepared for the State Lands Commission

Alan M. Paterson
Rand F. Herbert
Stephen R. Wee

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Lands Commission is in the process of removing navigation hazards from Delta waterways. In order to comply with federal regulations and to insure that items of historic importance are not removed or damaged, these studies have been commissioned.

II. LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF REPORT AREA

This report deals with the Mokelumne River from its mouth to its fork southeast of Walnut Grove and a portion of Snodgrass Slough on the northwest side of Dead Horse Island. The report area is in San Joaquin and Sacramento counties, the Mokelumne River and the North Fork of the Mokelumne River forming the boundary between the two. (See map)

The waterways, the Mokelumne River, its north and south forks, and a portion of Snodgrass Slough, are natural water courses, though reclamation has altered the character of the waterways through dredging for levee construction. Island outlines have also been redefined by reclamation activities.

The hydrology or water flow pattern of the Mokelumne River has been altered by the construction of dams in the Sierra Nevada mountains and

and foothills, most notably Pardee Reservoir (1929) and Camanche Reservoir (1964). These facilities were built by the East Bay Municipal Utility District for water supply services in the San Francisco Bay region. In 1951, the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation cut the Delta Cross-Channel from the Sacramento River to Snodgrass Slough north of Walnut Grove. The channel transfers water from the Sacramento River to the Mokelumne River system on its way to Central Valley Project pumps located at the southern end of the Delta near Tracy.

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF LANDS IN THE REPORT AREA

Land Ownership and Reclamation

Staten Island, lying between the two forks of the Mokelumne River and once known as Elk Island, was the subject of a border dispute between Sacramento and San Joaquin counties. San Joaquin County apparently had a better claim to the island but until it was developed the issue of ownership was relatively unimportant. Once some progress had been made on reclamation and the land became valuable from the standpoint of taxation the problem of the proper location of the county line took on more urgency. Sacramento County leveed taxes on the island in 1877, but the residents preferred to give their allegiance to San Joaquin County and to that county's much lower tax rate. In 1878, Staten Island was officially placed in San Joaquin County. (Tinkham, 19)

The jurisdictional squabble apparently had little effect on the development of Staten Island. Swamp Land District No. 38 was formed in 1864 under the state's Board of Swamp Land Commissioners and a low levee soon protected about 1,200 acres on the higher north end of the island. (USBR, Report DL-5, 9) In 1869, the Tide Land Reclamation Company, one of the most

important early development companies in the Delta, controlled two-thirds or more of the island. (Map of Tide Land Reclamation Company Holdings, 1869) In 1873 five-foot high levees were erected but they failed in 1875 and had to be repaired. (USBR, Report DL-5, 9) The island was flooded in 1878 but by the end of the year reconstruction was under way and wooden bulkheads were being installed for additional protection. (Thompson and West, 133)

One of the apparent legacies of Tide Land Reclamation Company's occupation of much of Staten Island was the island's purchase by James Ben Ali Haggin, who was at one time that company's president. Small owners had occupied some of Staten Island in the early 1870s but by 1877 control rested almost exclusively in Haggin's hands. James B. Haggin had come to California from his native Kentucky during the Gold Rush, established himself as a lawyer in San Francisco and soon emerged as a capitalist and financier. Besides his Delta interests, he was a founder of Kern County Land Company. Haggin operated on a grand scale, breeding fine race horses including the 1886 Kentucky Derby winner and travelling by private railway car and steam yacht. (Burnley, 265-270) He leased his Staten Island acreage to tenants and by 1879 approximately 200 people were living on the island. The community of Hagginsville, boasting a post office and store with a school and hotel in the offing, was established on west central Staten Island facing the North Fork of the Mokelumne River. Despite the optimism of its founders, the village was destined for obscurity since there was insufficient trade in the area to support it. (Thompson and West, 133; Thompson, 421-422; San Francisco Bulletin, November 28, 1879) Haggin remained in possession of all but the southwestern corner of the island until

turn-of-the-century when the Staten Island Company took over his holdings. In 1906 the company consolidated its control of the island and it has remained in single ownership.

The levees failed and the island was flooded again in 1881, while in 1886 only the southern portion was inundated. (Thompson, 477) The great flood of 1907 engulfed the island for the last time. (USBR, Report DL-5, 9) An interesting feature of Staten Island's history is that no modern reclamation district has ever been formed; Swamp Land District No. 38, dating from 1864, continues to maintain the island's levee system.

Settlement in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta occurred first and most easily on the higher ground near the Sacramento River. Tyler Island, which meets the Sacramento River at its northern end, reflected that pattern. The northern sector of the island and especially the northwesterly portion along Georgiana Slough were divided into relatively small holdings compared to the large acreages that characterize the remainder of the island until recent times.

Tyler Island was first settled in 1852. When the State's Board of Swamp Land Commissioners was created in 1861 island residents were quick to form District No. 4. By 1870 a levee three feet high had been constructed at the island's northern end (USBR, Report DL-5, 5), and by 1877 one-quarter of the island had been reclaimed. (Thompson, 436) The Tide Land Reclamation Company owned about one-quarter of Tyler Island in the early 1870s but by 1877 most of the central and southern lands not yet reclaimed were owned by T. H. Williams, and by 1881 Williams was associated with David Bixler. (Sacramento County Assessors Map Books, 1877, 1881) General T. H. Williams was a major Delta owner who also owned land on Grand Island and in the Yolo

Basin as well as future Empire Tract-King Island territory that he also shared with Bixler. With his huge holdings and an unpopular preference for working his land with Chinese labor rather than leasing it out, Williams was apparently regarded as a "land-hog" by his neighbors. (Dana, 163; Thompson, 473)

Reclamation district organization was centered in the north during the 1870s and uniform plans for reclamation were abandoned. Reclamation District No. 136, for example, was established in 1872 to cover only 439 acres. (DWR, Bulletin 37, 121) Despite the absence of a comprehensive reclamation authority, work continued. When the levees were rebuilt following the 1878 flood that inundated the northern quarter of the island, they were the largest in the Delta at that time, measuring seven feet in height. (Thompson, 476)

Reclamation District No. 386 was established on central Tyler Island in 1881 and reorganized in 1894 as Reclamation District No. 563. At the southern end, district organization was delayed until 1891 resulting in the final reclamation of the island in 1894. (USBR, Report DL-5, 5; Thompson, 476) The large land holdings of the 1870s and the 1880s were relatively slow in eroding; at least as late as the 1930s Tyler Island Farms and Libby, McNeil and Libby controlled the extensive tract once owned by Williams and Bixler. (Sacramento County Assessors Map Book, 1936) In subsequent years portions of these holdings were sold to smaller owners.

One of the Delta's most important towns is located on northern Tyler Island along the Sacramento River. Walnut Grove was founded about 1857 on high ground where Georgiana Slough joins the Sacramento River. Although on Tyler Island, Walnut Grove's location places it outside the concern of the current report.

Bouldin Island, named for a pioneer San Joaquin District Attorney, was organized as Swamp Land District No. 22 in 1861 but little was done to reclaim the island. In 1864, Sargent Brothers and Smith bought parts of the island and in 1867 the Sargents took over the whole tract, then giving half of it to Smith. (Thompson and West, 133) The island was purchased about 1871, apparently by men connected to the Pacific Distillery Corporation of San Francisco. They hoped to grow barley and potatoes for the production of alcohol. (Rogers, July 9, 1951) In 1871 a four and half foot levee was constructed but it broke in a flood the next year and the island was abandoned by 1874. In 1877 a new four foot high levee was built. (USBR, Report DL-5, 8) The new levee withstood the floods of 1878 but even so seepage under the levee caused serious problems. Wooden bulkheads secured by pilings were added to reinforce the levees. (Thompson, 478) Bouldin Island was owned by Stephens, Baker and Company in the mid-1870s but by the end of the decade most of the island was owned by Henry Voorman and Louis and Frederick Schultz. They remained in control of Bouldin Island until 1903-1905 when (San Joaquin County Plats, 1876, 1879, 1897, 1901, 1903; San Joaquin County, map, 1905) Robert Hickmott purchased Schultz's interests. The Schultz name was left on Schultz Landing at the southwestern corner of the island where fish were delivered and iced for further shipment. At the turn-of-the-century the settlement had a store, a hotel and several houses in addition to the fish packing sheds. The town began an understandable decline following 1908 when Bouldin Island was flooded. (Delta Advisory Planning Council) The landing remained in use, however, even by the large San Francisco-Stockton steamers. (Fallman interview)

When he purchased land on Bouldin Island, Robert Hickmott was far from being a stranger to Bouldin Island. An Englishman by birth, he had established a cannery in Oakland in 1890 and in 1892 he set up a small asparagus cannery in a barn on Bouldin Island near the mouth of Mokelumne River. The 2,800 cases of canned asparagus produced in 1892 proved profitable and by 1896 Hickmott's annual capacity was over 150, 000 cases. About 1900 another cannery was added and that summer a solid twenty car train of Hickmott's canned asparagus was shipped east from Terminous. Hickmott was preparing to sell his Bouldin Island holdings for over a million dollars in 1904 when the levee broke for the first of several times and the island was flooded, postponing the sale indefinitely. (May, 197-204) Reclamation District No. 786 was formed that year and the levee was repaired but the island was inundated in 1907 and in 1908. The disaster did not eliminate Hickmott as a factor in the canning industry for in 1911 a new plant was opened on Orwood Tract, but Bouldin Island's days as a canning center were ended by the repeated flooding.

Various means were used in attempts to plug the levee breaks that were plaguing Bouldin Island. Heavy pilings were driven in double rows to hold brush and silt that would hopefully form the core of a new levee, but when those methods failed more drastic remedies might be tried. At Central Landing on Bouldin Landing, pilings failed to close the break and water depths in the area were as much as 75 feet. Henry Voorman, whose Voorman Company owned the adjacent land, loaded derelict sailing ships with rocks and sank them in the break, all to no avail. (Fallman interview) The island's owners could not agree on a further course of action and as a result nothing was done to reclaim the island after 1908 flooding. It remained a tidal lagoon for ten years.

Bouldin Island was reclaimed by Lee Phillips in association with George Shima and California Delta Farms in 1916-1918 and the levees, broken in at least a dozen places, were repaired or relocated entirely. When the island was being closed by the dredgers in 1917, fish became trapped, attracting commercial fishermen. The California Division of Fish and Game declared the island off-limits to such fishing and sent a patrol boat to the area to enforce its edict. One morning the government vessel was found adrift and her two patrolmen dead. The murderers, disgruntled fishermen, were eventually tracked down and sent to San Quentin for a crime committed on the flooded island. (Fallman interview)

By 1918 ownership was transferred to the Bouldin Land Company except for small parcels belonging to Atherton, Burton and McCarthy, all associates of Lee Phillips. (San Joaquin County plats, 1918) The island has since remained in a single corporate ownership, although title has changed hands.

New Hope Tract is bordered on the north by the Mokelumne River, on the west by that river's south fork, and on the south by Hog Slough. New Hope Tract and adjoining Bract Tract to the south were organized as Swamp Land District No. 5 under the Board of Swamp Land Commissioners and an ambitious reclamation scheme was inaugurated. In addition to the levees, the district proposed a canal running from the river on the north side of the tract to Beaver Slough to reduce the volume of water the river would have to carry past the tract. By 1865 the canal was reported largely completed but no mention is found of it thereafter. (DWR, Bulletin 37, 116) In 1870 the land was in various small holdings but R. C. Sargent, the largest landowner on the Mokelumne River mainland tracts, acquired most of New Hope Tract by the mid-1870s. Sargent retained the area between Beaver Slough and Hog Slough until his

death (San Joaquin County, maps, 1883, 1895, 1905), but sold most of the area north of Beaver Slough in 1877 and 1878. (Thompson, 496) In 1880, Reclamation District No. 348 was organized and the tract was reclaimed between 1880 and 1884. (Thompson, 496) The main settlement on New Hope Tract adjacent to the waterways was New Hope Landing, the head of regularly scheduled steamer navigation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The town of New Hope was located considerably to the east, near where the Consumnes River meets the Mokelumne River, and was renamed Thornton after a pioneering farmer in 1907 when the Western Pacific Railroad reached the area. New Hope Landing was not a community of particular importance apart from its connection to Mokelumne River navigation.

Brack Tract, occupying the area between Hog and Sycamore sloughs, was originally owned by Samuel Fisher in 1856. Jacob Brack, a Swiss native, bought 10,000 acres in the area in 1875, though he soon sold all but 3,000 acres on which he grew wheat. (Thompson and West, 135) Brack held the entire tract until about the turn-of-the-century. (San Joaquin County, maps, 1895, 1905) Reclamation districts were formed in 1873, one overlapping onto Terminous Tract, and the area was reclaimed in 1886. (Thompson, 496) Reclamation District No. 2033 was formed in 1919 and continues in operation today.

A narrow gauge railroad, the San Joaquin and Sierra, was completed from Brack's Landing to Woodbridge, Lodi and Valley Springs in 1885. The line defaulted on its bonds in 1888 and was purchased by a Southern Pacific subsidiary. The track was converted to standard gauge by 1904 but the line was later abandoned. (Beebe, 259)

On Terminous Tract, R. C. Sargent owned substantial acreage, including

the area around Sargent Slough, which he dammed in the 1870s. Swamp Land District No. 46, formed in 1864, put up 10 miles of levees and tide gates on intercepted sloughs. (DWR, Bulletin 37, 118) In 1873-1874 reclamation districts were formed but flooding remained a problem until more permanent reclamation was accomplished in 1886. (Thompson, 496) The tract flooded subsequently in 1903-1904 and again in 1907. (USBR, Report DL-4, 5) Reclamation District No. 548, still in existence today, was established in 1892. The town of Terminous is located at the junction of the South Fork of the Mokelumne River and Little Potato Slough. It was established about 1900 by John Dougherty at the end of a road running into the Delta. The Western Pacific Railroad built a spur to the site and constructed warehouses and docks where cargoes could be transferred to and from vessels and railway cars. The town thus became an important shipping point for Delta products.

Agriculture

(Source, except as noted: Bureau of Reclamation, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigation, Report Areas DL-3, DL-4, DL-5)

On Staten Island corn and milo played an important role in the crop pattern, and beginning in 1931 hay and grain increased in importance. By 1955 over half the island was planted to these crops. Asparagus acreage went through cycles of growth and decline, as did sugar beets, though the beets were never a significant crop. Potatoes were important in 1930 and 1931 while tomatoes have been planted since the late 1940s.

In the 1924-1932 period asparagus was by far the most important crop on Tyler Island but by 1938 acreage had begun to drop and by 1948 none

was grown on the island. The decline in asparagus acreage matched the increase in corn, milo, grain and hay so that by 1955 three-quarters of the island's acreage was planted to those field crops. Tree crops, primarily pears, have tended to decline, but they were never planted on more than 500 of the island's 9,000 acres.

Asparagus was a major crop on Bouldin Island before its major flooding in the early 20th century. In the 1920s the crop was little grown but in the 1930s asparagus regained popularity on the island so that by 1948 it covered 2,600 of the island's 6,000 acres. A gradual decline in asparagus plantings began soon after. Between 1924 and 1932 sugar beets were planted only once, in 1929, and acreage devoted to that crop since has generally been relatively minor, although the 1938 report showed 1,400 acres of sugar beets. In the 1920s celery and onions were of major importance with onions declining in the late 1920s. At the same time, potatoes were planted but after the early 1930s potato acreage too began to slide. By the early 1950s, asparagus still claimed the largest portion of the island with hay and grain second and tomatoes becoming important.

On New Hope Tract, alfalfa, hay and grain (some unirrigated in the 1920s) were important crops throughout the 1920s. Thereafter asparagus and sugar beets gained in acreage, though the beets did not remain as important. In the 1950s, corn and milo and tomatoes became major crops and over 1,000 acres were devoted irrigated pasture. An interesting footnote to New Hope Tract's agricultural history was the use on the tract of the first gasoline-powered Caterpillar tractor sold for regular agricultural service in 1908. (Hillman interview)

A somewhat similar cropping pattern occurred on Brack Tract where

asparagus plantings showed a rapid increase in the 1920s, peaking in 1929. Pasture, grain, hay corn and milo were important crops, especially with the decline of asparagus acreage. Sugar beets were important primarily in the early 1930s.

Terminus Tract, with between 10,000 and 12,000 acres under cultivation (the number varied over the years) has grown substantial acreages of most major Delta crops over the years. Especially notable was the 3,000 acres of asparagus in 1924 and the continuous and significant cultivation of celery. Asparagus acreage varied over the years but it remained a major crop on the tract.

Transportation

Boats attempted to navigate the Mokelumne River in the 1850s to facilitate the movement of supplies to the Sierra mining camps. The success of early ventures led to the founding of Mokelumne City above the mouth of the Consumnes River in 1857 and a line of sloops connected that city with San Francisco and other towns from 1857 to about 1860. Mokelumne City was destroyed in the 1862 flood. (Thompson and West, 134) The high water of 1862 was instrumental in the history of Mokelumne River navigation. With the roads impassable, the mining camps were suffering for supplies and a fortune might await the first man to get a shipment through to the mines. With the fact in mind as well as a desire to establish the city he had founded as the head of river navigation, D. J. Locke chartered the steamer Fanny Ann to carry a cargo to Lockeford. The vessel's captain abandoned the effort at the town of Woodbridge, a rival for the honor of being the head of navigation. Locke refused to give up and soon agreed to purchase the steamer Pert on the condition it would reach Lockeford. The Pert succeeded

in the spring of 1862 and its success prompted the formation of the Mokelumne River Steam Navigation Company to operate the Pert and two other steamboats. Similar optimism led to the Mokelumne River Improvement Company in 1865 which had a state charter to improve the channel and charge a toll of 10 cents a ton on freight using the river. River traffic dropped, however, and the Improvement Company collapsed. (Thompson and West, 38)

The lull in river use can be traced to the decline of mining since it was as a route to the mines that the river was originally developed. It was not until the 1870s and 1880s that the Delta lands adjacent to the Mokelumne River were developed sufficiently to generate much traffic. Snags and overhanging trees made navigation difficult in some stretches, leading to a federal appropriation for clearance work by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1881. (House Doc. 103, v.5, 828) In 1884 additional money was provided for the work of a snag boat primarily in the stretch from Snodgrass Slough to Benson's Ferry. (House Executive Doc. 1, 362) The project was expanded in 1891 to include dredging near New Hope Landing and the closing of a "small canal." Additional appropriations were made in 1892 and 1894 but money was then cut off until 1905 when regular appropriations were resumed for snagging, dredging and other channel maintenance projects. (House Doc. 103, v.5, 828) The Army Engineer's activities on the Mokelumne River never constituted a major project for by 1931 only about \$50,000 had been spent on the river, (DWR, Bulletin 29, 505)

Waterborne traffic on the Mokelumne River was varied, with riverboats, scow schooners, gasoline and diesel vessels in the twentieth century and barges. In 1890, steamers for the Mokelumne River left San Francisco on

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. (Report on Internal Commerce, 201) By 1909, the Corps of Engineers advised that one steamboat company (identified elsewhere as the California Transportation Company) was operating on the river and they noted that most of the freight tonnage was carried on scow schooners. (House Doc. 103, v.5, 829) The river was generally classified as navigable to the New Hope-Galt Bridge but by 1914 New Hope Landing was the uppermost regular steamer stop, visited three times weekly by California Transportation Company boats from San Francisco (House Doc. 1409, 348) and the company owned land at the landing. (San Joaquin County Plats, 1897) The California Transportation Company may have enjoyed a monopoly on scheduled service but figures for 1914 showed that 7 steamers used the river, along with 33 gas vessels, 8 sailing vessels and 24 unrigged barges or dredges, in addition to gasoline boats and barges plying Snodgrass Slough. The total cargo for that year amounted to almost 70,000 tons, 37,000 of which were in potatoes. (Department of Engineering, 98) Tonnage peaked at over 90,000 tons in 1913 (House Doc. 92, v.2, 1471-1472) and held at 70,000 to 80,000 tons through the early 1930s. (DWR, Bulletin 29, 505) Landings dotted the Mokelumne River shoreline where the riverboats, launches and barges could tie up when their services were required. The last voyage of the Mokelumne River steamers is not recorded but it seems reasonable to assume that steamer service declined in the 1920s and that, as in the rest of the Delta, barges and internal combustion tugs and launches carried a declining river traffic in the 1930s and 1940s.

Only three bridges cross the Mokelumne River in the report area; the modern span that carries Highway 12, one at New Hope Landing and the other at Millers Ferry near the confluence of the North Fork and Snodgrass Slough. The predecessors of the latter bridges were in place by 1914. (Corps, map, 1914)

A ferry ran between Terminous and Bouldin Island and Staten Island. (Geologic and Hydrologic Map of the Mokelumne Area, 1938)

IV. SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

Objects identified by State Lands Commission as subject to removal have been researched as fully as possible and evaluated as to their historic values and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The sites are numbered according to their location adjoining Bouldin Island (BI), Brack Tract (BT), New Hope Tract (NHT), Staten Island (SI), Tyler Island (TI) or Terminous Tract (TT). Locations are numbered in a clockwise manner. State Lands Commission worked with U. S. Geological Survey topographical maps in locating the objects but for ease of reproduction the attached map of site locations is based on U. S. Bureau of Reclamation Plate 3, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigations, Report Area DL-5, January 1964.

BI-2

Location: Mokelumne River, on mid-river berm west of Bouldin Island.

Description: Pilings close to the berm, arranged in rows, with the greatest concentration on the western side of the berm. Some pilings extend north and south of the berm. The decayed remnants of a dredger are also visible on the eastern side.

History: The original levee line of Bouldin Island at this point was to the west of the present levee. The old levee line can be traced through the berms and rows of pilings that once marked the levee. Leo Fallman confirmed the use of pilings in an effort to patch the levee early in the 20th century and noted that rock-filled derelict sailing ships were also sunk near the site

in a further attempt at levee repair. The levee was probably altered when Lee Philips reclaimed the island in 1916-1918.

Overlays on Geological Survey maps show BI-2 to have been the site of Central Landing (USBS, 1908) and other maps confirm the fact. (Rideout, map, 1910) Central Landing appears to have been a relatively important steamboat landing.

Evaluation: The pilings once used to reinforce a portion of the old Bouldin Island levee, represent one phase in the reclamation history of that island and coincide with what may have been an important steamboat landing. They also represent the insecure character of the Delta levees and underline the fact that changes in Delta geography over the years have been rather commonplace. The site has deteriorated as a result of its long submergence and it embodies no historical associations sufficiently important to qualify it for the National Register of Historic Places. However, as graphic evidence of the manner in which the Delta's geography has been altered and realtered it does have some local interest. We recommend that only pilings posing significant navigational hazards in this area of heavy small boat traffic be removed in order to preserve as much as possible of the old levee site. The site should be re-examined from this point of view and, in consultation with the State Lands Commission, appropriate maps and/or photographs should be marked to insure that as much of the site remains intact as possible. The berm and the pilings located close enough to the berm to present minimal navigation hazards can contribute to an understanding of the problems involved in the reclamation of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

BI-3

Location: Mokelumne River, on the western edge of Bouldin Island.

Description: Substantial numbers of piles some arranged in rows, some at northern end of the site lashed together to form dolphins.

History: The rows of pilings were probably associated with levee reinforcement as were those at site BI-2. The dolphins indicate the presence of a landing and 1907 and 1913 maps confirm that the location was known as Carter's Landing. (Punnet Bros., maps, 1907, 1913) The site has also been labelled Camp 5 (USC & GS, map 1931; Behrens, map, 1957) and as Hickmott Cannery (Quail, map, 1912) or "old cannery" (Corps, map, 1914). A large structure appears to have been located on the levee. (USGS, map, 1908; USC & GS, map, 1931)

Evaluation: No structures are present and the site is deteriorated to the point that it is impossible to be sure whether many of the existing pilings were used for a landing, levee reinforcement or structural support. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BI-4

Location: Mokelumne River, north of the Highway 12 bridge, along Bouldin Island.

Description: Piles, arranged singly or in pairs along the bank.

History: The only record of development in the area is a Corps of Engineers ferry permit dated February 12, 1929. (Corps, permit file) A 1931 map shows a row of pilings similar in location to those seen on the inspection cruise but does not explain their purpose. (USC & GS, map, 1931)

Evaluation: Uncertainty as to the purpose of pilings in this location and lack of documentation make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BI-5

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the north shore of Bouldin Island.

Description: Pilings, approximately 15 in number, along and out from the levee. Some are in groups; none extend over two feet above the water. A small, maintained boat landing is also present.

History: Camp 14 was located at this site. (USC & GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1957) The site was also identified as Hickmott Cannery. (Quail, map, 1912) However, other maps indicate other sites as cannery locations along the north shore of Bouldin Island although so far as is known there were only two Hickmott canneries on the island and only one on the northern side. The result of the conflicting map data is considerable uncertainty as to the exact location of canneries pre-dating Bouldin Island's long submergence.

Evaluation: The pilings are probably part of the Camp 14 landing. The connection to asparagus canning is tenuous. The remains of the landing are in poor condition and the site exhibits show no remarkable historical characteristics. The site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BI-6

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the north shore of Bouldin Island.

Description: Ten or more pilings along the levee, all only slightly above the water.

History: The site marked on one map as "old cannery" may coincide with one of Robert Hickmott's canneries. (USGS, map, 1908) The site was also known as G. H. Landing (Quail, map, 1912), and by 1931 Camp 15 was located there with 13 structures, one on the levee. (USC & GS, map, 1931) Camp 15

apparently remained in 1957. (Behrens, map, 1957) A Holly Sugar Company conveyor for loading sugar beets was installed at Camp 15 in 1936, apparently just upstream from the location of the existing pilings. (Corps, permit file)

Evaluation: The pilings are probably part of the Camp 15 Landing and the camp was apparently a typical Delta island farm camp. The connection with asparagus canning is tenuous at the site. The remains of the landing are in poor condition. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BI-7

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the north shore of Bouldin Island.

Description: Twenty or more pilings, some extending several feet out of the water, arranged in a line along the levee.

History: Two maps refer to the site as a cannery. (Rideout, map, 1910; Corps, map, 1914) it is marked as a landing as early as 1901. (Punnet Bros., map, 1901) Camp 17 occupied the site with 12 structures, one of them on the levee. (USC & GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1957) In 1945 a beet dump was installed by Holly Sugar Company at the site. (Corps, permit file)

Evaluation: As noted above, the various maps are inconsistent in their reference to cannery sites, and the maps cited in this case date from a time when Bouldin Island was flooded and the canneries were no longer in operation. The accuracy of the cannery identification is therefore questionable. The pilings are probably the remains of the camp landing or of the beet dump once located at the site. The condition of the site and the absence of significant

historical associations should make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BI-8

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the north shore of Bouldin Island.

Description: State Lands Commission describes "piles" but no pilings were seen in that location during the inspection cruise of May 23, 1978.

History: Punnet Brothers 1901 map of the Delta shows an unidentified landing at the approximate site.

Evaluation: The apparent absence of physical remains and lack of documentation make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BT-1

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of Brack Tract.

Description: Several pilings near the bank, almost submerged.

History: Lindsay's Landing was located at the approximate location of the pilings. (Punnet Bros., map, 1907) Camp 26 may also have been at or near the site. (Behrens, map, 1957)

Evaluation: The site is in very poor condition, the purpose of the pilings unverifiable and documentation inadequate. The site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BT-2

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of Brack Tract.

Description: Several old pilings in the vicinity of a pump or siphon installation.

History: The site corresponds to Bracks Pump (Corps, amp, 1914) and is still the site of a pumping plant.

Evaluation: It is likely that the derelict pilings at the site were

associated with a previous pump installation. Their poor condition and lack of significant historical associations make them ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

NHT-1

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the southwestern corner of New Hope Tract.

Description: A single row of pilings, running along the levee for a considerable distance following the levee contour.

History: A landing, unnamed on early maps, existed at least as far back as 1901 (Punnet Bros., map, 1901; Rideout, map, 1910) and was later identified as Camp 7. (USC & GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1957)

Evaluation: Although a landing occupied the site, the pilings observed during the inspection cruise resemble levee reinforcing following the levee line more than they resemble the clusters of pilings usually associated with camp landings. Levee reinforcement work is, of course, unpermitted and therefore undocumented by federal and state authorities and does not appear on most other records. The character of the site, justifiable uncertainty as to the purpose of the existing pilings and the lack of significant historical associations make this site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

NHT-2

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of New Hope Tract, south of Beaver Slough.

Description: An apparently random cluster of pilings, half a dozen in number, near the bank.

History: An unnamed landing existed at the site early in the 20th century. (Punnet Bros., map, 1901; Rideout, map, 1910) No other information is available.

Evaluation: The condition of the site and lack of adequate documentation make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

NHT-3

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of New Hope Tract, south of Beaver Slough.

Description: The State Lands Commission describes "duckblind" but it was not located during the inspection cruise of May 23, 1978. Instead, several pilings, some grouped, were located at the site.

History: Duckblinds in the Delta are generally simply built structures not intended for permanence. Camp 3 was located at the site (Corps, map, 1914; USC & GS, map, 1931) and by 1920 there was an equipment shed at the location. (San Joaquin County Assessor Records)

Evaluation: The deteriorated condition of the site and the lack of any significant historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-1

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the southeastern shore of Staten Island.

Description: Several almost submerged pilings near the levee.

History: The site was once a landing referred to as San Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907, 1913), as Camp 30 (Corps, map, 1914; Behrens, map, 1957) or as Camp 29. (USC & GS, map, 1913)

Evaluation: Although the name underwent changes the site was a river landing for several decades. Its badly deteriorated condition and lack of significant historical associations make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-2

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the southwestern shore of Staten Island.

Description: Several piles, some with growth on them, located offshore from a pump installation. Two newer pilings guard the pump structure itself.

History: There was a landing at the site around the turn-of-the-century. (Punnet Bros., map, 1901; Rideout, map, 1910) It was also a pump site known as Valentine's Pump. (Corps. map, 1914) T. B. Valentine was the owner of the only land on Staten Island not controlled by James B. Haggin or the Staten Island Land Company until 1906 when ownership of the island was finally consolidated.

Evaluation: The purpose of the old pilings at the site is uncertain since they could have been part of the landing or of a pump installation prior to the arrangement in use today. This fact in addition to the extent of deterioration make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-2A

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of Staten Island.

Description: A single row of pilings following the levee.

History: Although Camps 4 and 5 were located south and north of the site respectively (Corps, map, 1914; USC & GS, map, 1931) no camp occupied that exact location. The appearance of pilings would indicate that they may have been used for levee reinforcing.

Evaluation: Documentation of levee reinforcement work is at best fragmented.

The nature of the site and the resulting of documentation together with the lack of significant historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-3

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of Staten Island.

Description: Pilings close to the levee in a single row. One cluster of three extends out slightly from the rest.

History: The town of Hagginsville was located near the site. (Sacramento Valley, map, 1895) The site itself was the location of Eucalyptus Landing. (Punnet Bros., maps, 1907, 1913)

Evaluation: The pilings along the levee may have been levee reinforcing. The cluster of three pilings may be the remains of the landing. The deteriorated condition of the site makes that identification rather tentative. The absence of significant historical associations makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-4

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the western shore of Staten Island.

Description: Ten pilings in a random arrangement.

History: The site is referred to as "Old Pump" and was probably a landing. (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907, 1913)

Evaluation: The site may be the remains of a landing but its deteriorated condition, uncertainties as to the use of the remaining pilings and the absence of significant historical associations make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-5

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Staten Island.

Description: State Lands Commission describes "piles" but they were not located during the inspection cruise of May 23, 1978.

History: The site was occupied by Lund Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1907, 1913) and later by Camp 24 (USC & GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1957)

Evaluation: The apparent absence of physical remains and the absence of documentation or significant historical associations makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-5A

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Staten Island.

Description: Ten or more pilings almost submerged, directly adjacent to the levee.

History: Camp 25 once occupied that location: (Behrens, maps, 1933, 1957)

Evaluation: Camp 25 was apparently a typical Delta island camp. The deteriorated condition of the site and the lack of significant historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-6

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Staten Island.

Description: Several almost submerged pilings.

History: The site was known as Hop Sing Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907, 1913) or Camp 26 (Corps, map, 1914; USC & GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1957). The camp appears to have been a small one, with only three

structures in 1914, one of them on the levee. (Corps, map, 1914)

Evaluation: The pilings are probably the remains of a river landing but their advanced state of deterioration and the absence of significant historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

SI-7

Location: South Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Staten Island.

Description: One large piling extending several feet above the water.

History: The site corresponds to Dickhon Landing. (Punnet Bros., maps, 1907, 1913) Camp 28 was to the north of the site. (Corps, map, 1914; Behrens, map, 1957)

Evaluation: The piling may have been part of a camp landing but its purpose is undiscernable. It is ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-10

Location: Snodgrass Slough, on the northeast shore of Tyler Island.

Description: Single row of pilings, running along the levee but at some distance from it at the north end.

History: No record of any structure or landing exists for this site. The pilings might be associated with levee reinforcing work.

Evaluation: The total absence of documentation and the lack of significant historic associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-11

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on northeastern shore of Tyler Island, opposite Eagle Tree (Staten Island).

Description: Several pilings in a closely spaced row with another cluster nearby.

History: The site corresponds to the turn-of-the-century Camp 2 landing. (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907) Clark No. 3 landing may also have been located in the area. (Punnet Bros., map, 1913)

Evaluation: The deteriorated condition of the site and the absence of significant historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-12

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Tyler Island.

Description: About 10 pilings near the bank. They may have formed a double row but the deteriorated condition of the site makes that uncertain.

History: Clark's or Brown's Pump was at the site and may have been a landing. (California Transportation Co., map, 1917; Corps, map 1914) A landing with buildings, pump and windmill existed there in 1931.

(USC & GS, map, 1931) In 1908 two structures were located on the levee and one was apparently over the water at the site. (USGS, map, 1908)

Evaluation: The deteriorated condition of the site, uncertainty as to the exact purpose of the remaining pilings, (landing, pump guard, structural support, etc.), and the absence of any significant historical association makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-13

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Tyler Island.

Description: Derelict small dock.

History: Camp 13 appears to have been near the site. (Behrens, map, 1957)

Evaluation: The small dock appears to be a lightly built fishing pier. It may have been associated with the nearby camp although its construction is so light that such a conclusion would be somewhat suspect. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-14

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Tyler Island.

Description: Derelict small dock.

History: The site coincides with the location of Camp H Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907), Camp F (Corps, map, 1914) or Camp 11 (Behrens, map, 1957). In 1908, two structures extended out over the river from the levee. (USGS, 1907-1908)

Evaluation: A camp landing, variously named, occupied the spot. However, as in the case of TI-11, the existing structure is probably too small to have been associated with the camp and may be of more recent vintage. The uncertainty as to its age or purpose and the absence of significant historical associations make the ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-15

Location: North Fork, Mokelumne River, on the eastern shore of Tyler Island.

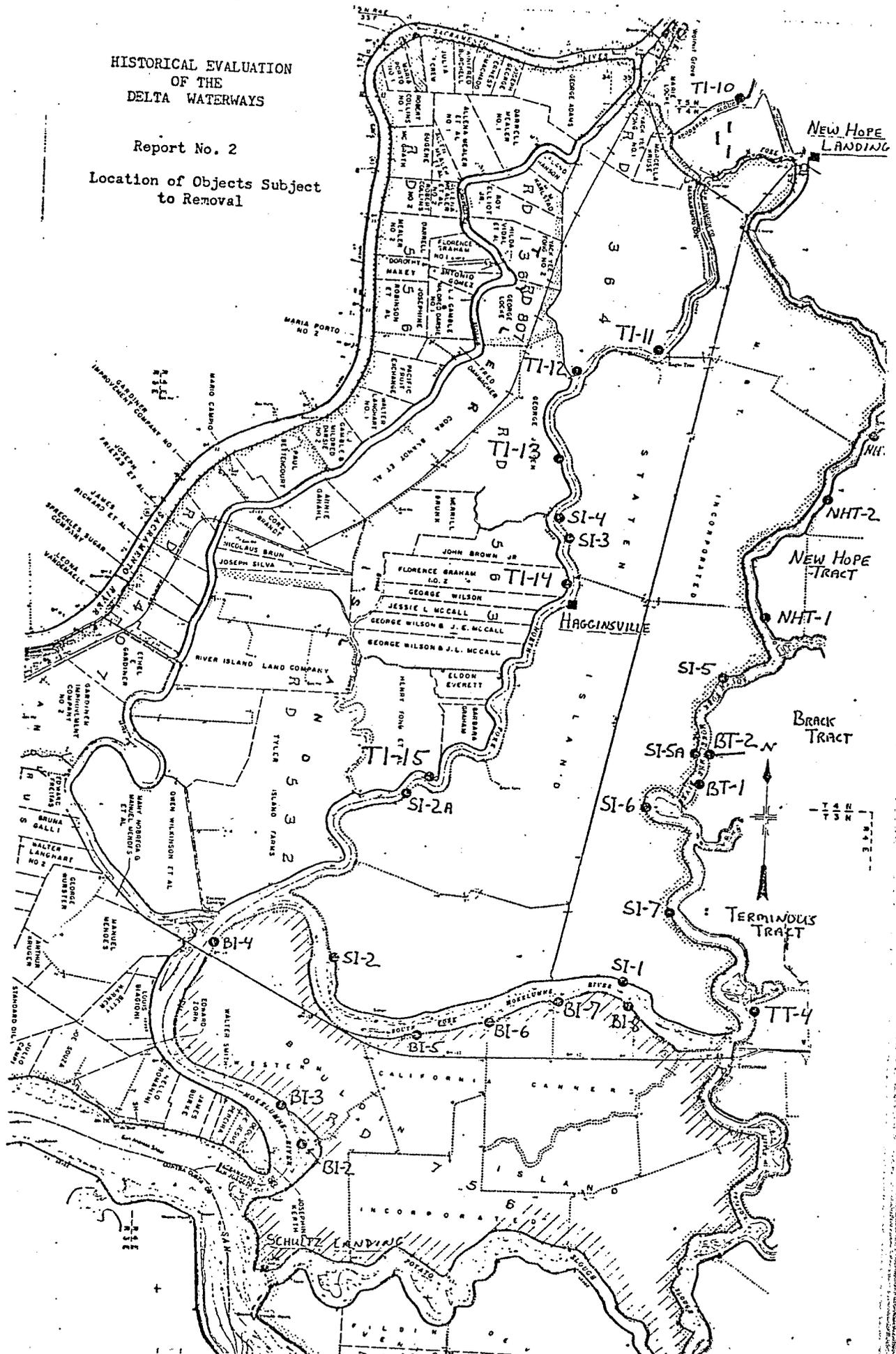
Description: Current navigation charts by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration show a shipwreck at the location and on-site inspection confirms the presence of what appears to be a vessel of wooden construction about 60 to 70 feet long in an advanced state of deterioration. Only some of the "ribs" and a small section of hull planking are visible. Debris litters the adjacent beach but it is impossible how much of it, if any, is related to the wrecked vessel.

History: No documentation regarding the wreck has been located. We have contacted local museum directors (Ray Hillman, Pioneer Museum, Stockton; James Henley, Sacramento Museum and History Commission, Sacramento; Emma James, Rio Vista Museum Association, Rio Vista), the Corps of Engineers, and local citizens including Stockton boat builder Wilton Colberg. With one exception none of the historians or local residents like Wallace McCormick, a former reclamation district officer who patrolled the Tyler Island levees, even knew of the wreck's existence. The exception was Tony Busalacci, a former fish buyer and mail boat operator, who recalled an "experimental" boat of 60 feet in length powered by a 75 horsepower Fairbanks-Morse engine and a unique chain and sprocket drive tied up along the North Fork of the Mokelumne River about 1925 or 1926. Mr. Busalacci also noted that it was common in the Delta to tie boats or barges that were no longer needed to the levees or other out of the way anchorages and leave them there. Eventually they would decay and sink. Our research indicates that this practice of abandoning apparently useless vessels was indeed widespread. Early maps show a mid-river berm near the location of the wreck (USGS, map, 1908) or even a cove at that spot (USC & GS, map, 1936) which could have made a protected mooring place, but neither map indicates the presence of a wreck.

HISTORICAL EVALUATION
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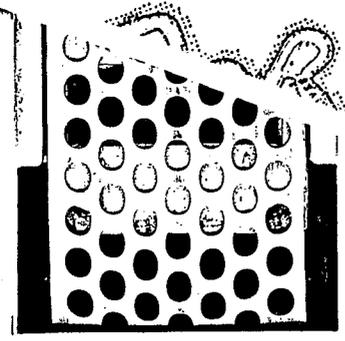
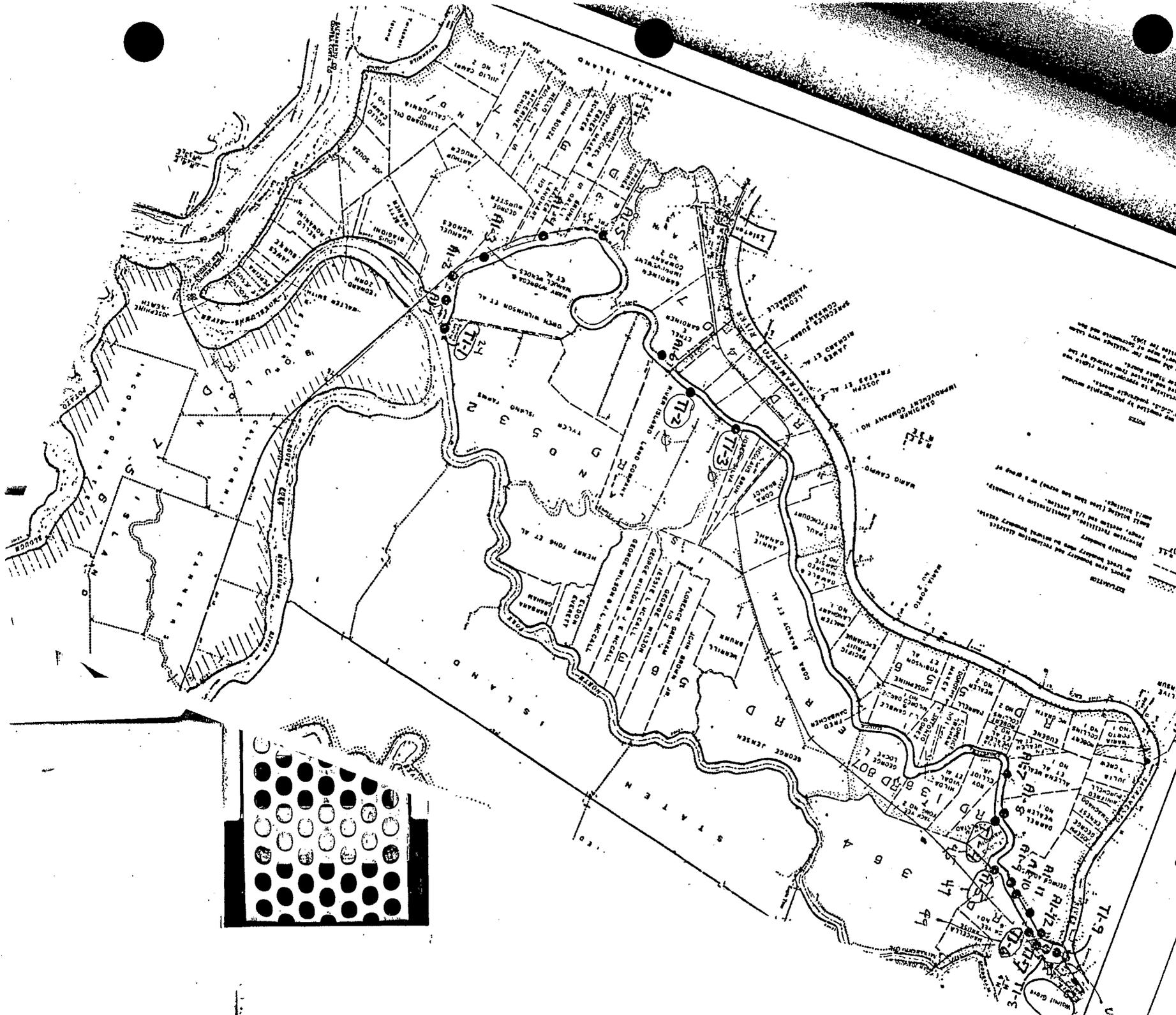
Location of Objects Subject
to Removal



HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS
Subject to Removal
Report No. 3

Map No. 100000 of photographic aerials
 This map is a reproduction of the original
 State Plane 1983 datum from the records of the
 Boundary Commission for the State of Georgia
 and the Georgia State Survey Commission.

NOTES
 1. The boundary shown on this map is the boundary as shown on the original boundary plat.
 2. The boundary shown on this map is the boundary as shown on the original boundary plat.
 3. The boundary shown on this map is the boundary as shown on the original boundary plat.



C-075932

C-075933

Evaluation: The identity of the wrecked boat at TI-15 is a mystery.

Except for the recollections of Tony Busalacci, no one could even remember its existence, indicating that it might have been in its virtually unrecognizable condition for a long enough time to be considered an unremarkable part of the landscape. The remains may be of the experimental boat, apparently unsuccessful, noted by Tony Busalacci but collaboration of that opinion has proven impossible. In its badly deteriorated, unidentifiable, and undocumented condition, the wreck should not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TT-4

Location: Terminous Tract, north of Terminous, on the South Fork, Mokelumne

Description: Two pilings projecting a foot or more above the water.

History: The only appearance of site on maps is a listing for Dam Landing in 1913. (Punnet Bros., map, 1913)

Evaluation: The deteriorated condition of the site, uncertainty regarding the purpose of the remaining pilings and the absence of significant historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

V. CONCLUSION

Objects identified as scheduled for removal by the State Lands Commission have been researched and evaluated in terms of their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places to determine whether or not they should in fact be removed. When objects identified by the State Lands Commission were not located by on-site inspection, research was necessarily

limited to the general characteristics of the site.

The sites on the Mokelumne River were primarily associated with camps, beet dumps, pump installations or levee reinforcement. All such sites are deteriorated to the point that the identification of the remaining pilings with specific purposes would usually be an exercise in speculation. None of the sites had any significant historic associations that would qualify them for the National Register of Historic Places; the camps, landings and pump installations appear to be typical of those once existing throughout the Delta and the numerous sites marked as canneries on Bouldin Island may or may not correspond to the actual sites of pre-1907 canning plants. The vessel wrecked at site TI-15 is badly deteriorated and proved impossible to identify in more than a very tentative fashion.

Although not strictly eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, site BI-2 in the Mokelumne River does present an interesting study in Delta reclamation geography and illustrates an important chapter in Bouldin Island's history. We have recommended that the site be evaluated for the purpose of retaining as many of the old pilings around the berm as possible while still enhancing the safety of small craft navigation in the area. Such an approach will not materially reduce the historic value of the site.

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- Hillman, Ray (Director, Pioneer Museum, Stockton)

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- San Joaquin County. Assessor. (plat maps, Real Estate Folders)
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- Map of the County of San Joaquin, 1883, John Q. Nied.
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Report Area DL-4: Beaver Slough to Stockton and Vicinity, January 1964

Report Area DL-5: Walnut Grove to Isleton and Vicinity, January 1964

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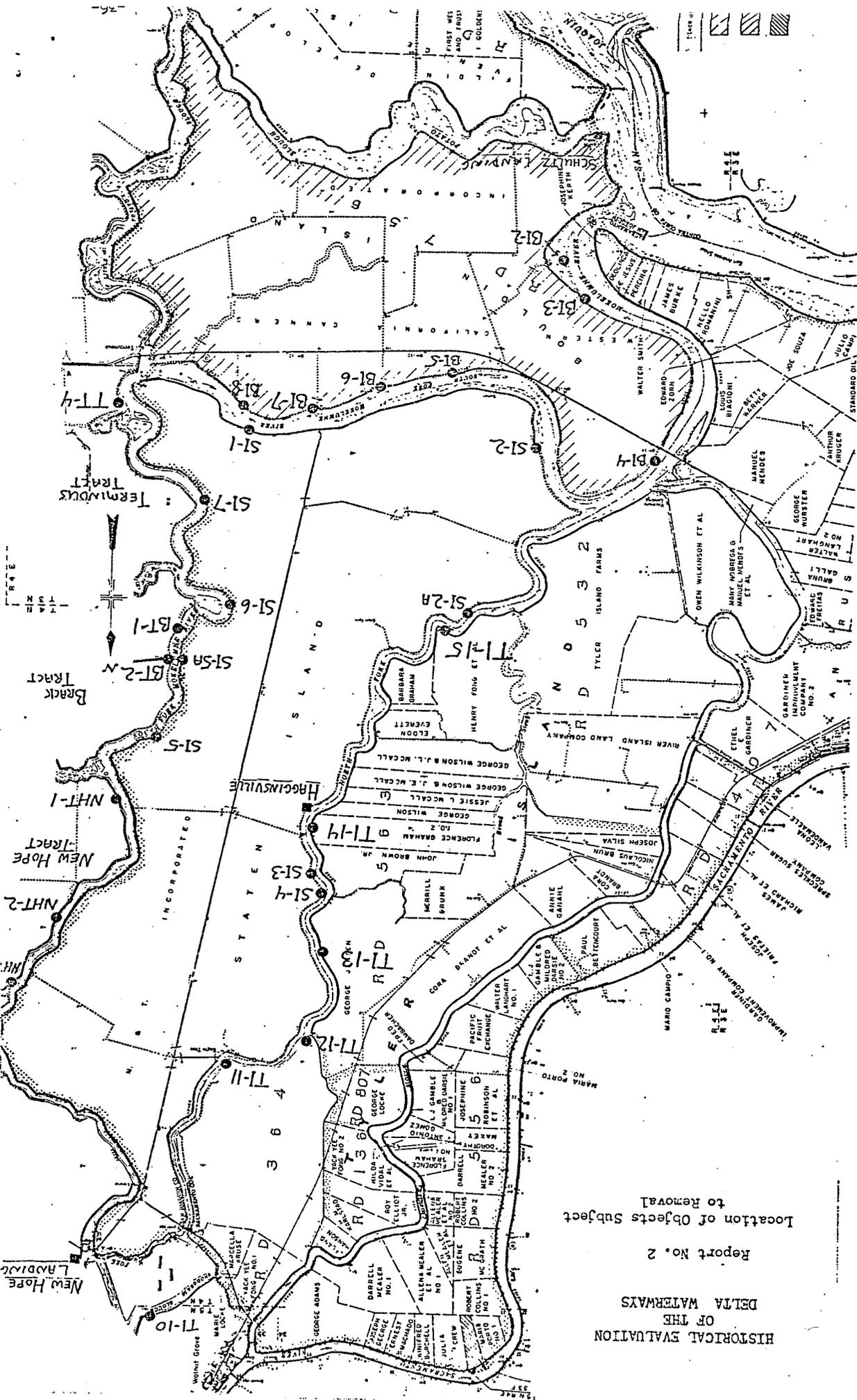
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HISTORICAL EVALUATION
OF THE
DELTA WATERWAYS

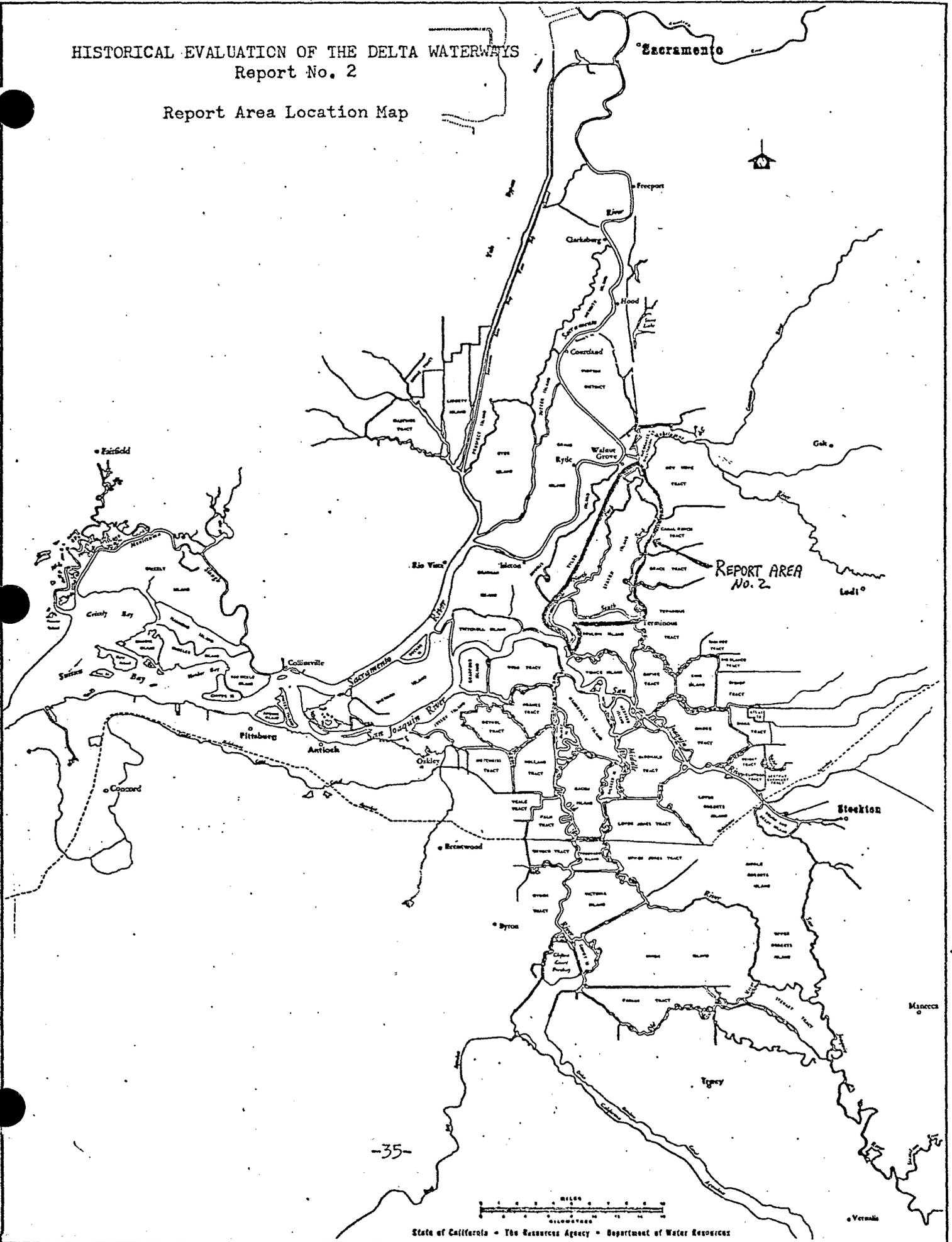
Report No. 2

Location of Objects Subject
to Removal



HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS
Report No. 2

Report Area Location Map



HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 3

Prepared for the State Lands Commission

Alan M. Paterson
Rand F. Herbert
Stephen R. Wee

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Lands Commission is in the process of removing navigation hazards from Delta waterways. In order to comply with federal regulations and to insure that items of historic importance are not removed or damaged, these studies have been commissioned.

II. LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF REPORT AREA

This report deals with Georgiana Slough, a waterway linking the Sacramento and Mokelumne rivers and lying entirely within Sacramento County. Georgiana Slough is a natural waterway and under natural conditions it and Three Mile Slough were the only routes by which Sacramento River water was transferred to the sometimes fresh-water deficient San Joaquin Delta to the south. Flow in Georgiana Slough is determined by the volume of Sacramento River flow; at periods of low river flow, 40 percent or more of the water passing Sacramento may go through Georgiana Slough. (DWR, Bulletin No. 27, 37). Because of its relationship to the Sacramento River, Georgiana Slough was included in the Sacramento River Flood Control Project adopted by the State in 1911 and by the Federal Government, through the Corps of Engineers, in 1917. In order to carry large volumes of water safely, the levees along the slough are maintained under Corps of Engineers' direction to a higher standard than levees not associated with the flood control project. In 1950-52 the levees were "set back", widening the channel, and maintenance continues including riprapping with rock to protect levee embankments. (Corps map, 1949; McCormack interview). Georgiana Slough's inclusion in the flood control project has insured that the slough, more so than most other Delta waterways, has been the subject of continuing modification.

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF LANDS IN THE REPORT AREA

Land Ownership and Reclamation

The natural levees and higher lands adjacent to the Sacramento River attracted the earliest permanent white settlers in the lowland Delta. With early occupation, there was a tendency

toward the maintenance of landholdings that were smaller than those found in much of the Delta where difficult reclamation conditions necessitated the consolidation of land into large units and the application of outside capital. Andrus and Tyler Islands both have higher sections near the Sacramento River as well as low-lying acreage that proved more difficult to reclaim.

Both islands were first settled in 1852. Low levees were built on a portion of Andrus Island by 1855, but they proved ineffective. (USBR, Report DL-5, 6). Both Andrus Island and Tyler Island farmers were quick to take advantage of the opportunity to organize districts under the State's Board of Swamp Land Commissioners created in 1861. Districts were formed on both islands that same year; District No. 4 on Tyler and District No. 8 on Andrus. On Andrus Island several sloughs were closed and levees were erected, though they suffered damage in the flood of 1862. On Tyler Island a three-foot high levee was built by 1870 at the island's northern end (USBR, Report DL-5, 5) and by 1877, one-quarter of the island had been reclaimed. (Thompson, 436). In 1869 the Tide Land Reclamation Company owned, as part of its 120,000 acres in the Delta, portions of both islands, primarily in their southern swamplier sections. (Map of Tide Land Reclamation Company Holdings, 1869). The Tide Land Reclamation Company undertook the reclamation of Brannan Island, a tract essentially connected to Andrus Island, and in 1871 the Company leveed Andrus Island as well. (USBR, Report DL-5, 7). The reclamation enterprise then sold its Andrus Island properties for \$25.00 per acre. (Sacramento Union, April 12, 1873). On Tyler Island most of the central and southern lands not yet reclaimed passed into the hands of General T. H. Williams by 1877. Williams, an important if disliked landowner on other islands as well, was investing a mining fortune derived from Nevada's Comstock Lode where land he had accepted in lieu of a debt proved exceptionally valuable. By 1881, Williams owned them in association with David Bixler. (Sacramento County Assessor's Map Books, 1877, 1881).

The inadequacy of the early levees on Andrus Island caused disagreements among the landowners resulting in the formation of several small, uncoordinated reclamation districts in the early 1870's. Despite the lack of agreement on reclamation policy, the island's levees continue to grow, reaching a six-foot height before the 1878 flood. That flood did severe damage to levees throughout the Delta and prompted the formation of a new Reclamation District No. 317, by special act of the State Legislature to protect Andrus Island's more vulnerable southern section. The center of the island was organized as District No. 407 in 1882, while the higher northern end did not form Reclamation District No. 556 until 1893. (USBR, Report DL-5, 6-7). Floods in 1907 and 1909 inundated Andrus Island and a levee break on the San Joaquin River in the summer of 1972 flooded much of the island and adjoining Brannan Island.

The reclamation history of Tyler Island differs somewhat from the Andrus Island experience. While on Andrus Island the 1978 flood prompted district organization first in the most susceptible area, organization on Tyler Island in 1872 and 1880 occurred at the northern, more settled sections of the tract near Georgiana Slough and in units that covered only a few hundred acres each. When the levees were rebuilt following the 1878 flood that inundated the northern quarter of the island, they were the largest in the Delta at that time, measuring seven feet in height. (Thompson, 476). Central Tyler Island was organized in 1881 as Reclamation District No. 386 (later reorganized as No. 563) while at the southern end, district organization was delayed until 1891 resulting in the final reclamation of the island in 1894. (USBR, Report DL-5, 5; Thompson, 476).

The land ownership pattern established on Tyler Island by the 1880's remained essentially intact well into the twentieth century. A number of moderate-sized farms occupied Tyler Island's northern end and the upper reaches of Georgiana Slough. The rest of the island was owned by the Voorman Company, headed by Henry Voorman, by 1900. (Sacramento County Assessor's Map Book, 1900). Voorman also had extensive acreage on Bouldin Island. In the summer of 1919, the Voorman Company sold its Tyler Island holdings, totaling over 4,600 acres, to a group of San Francisco capitalists for \$1,250,000. (San Francisco Chronicle, August 27, 1919). Within a month Tyler Island Farms had been formed to operate the land. The new Company's directors included Thomas and Daniel McCormack of Rio Vista and Mortimer Fleishacker of San Francisco. (San Francisco Chronicle, September 9, 1919). Tyler Island Farms slowly disposed of much of its domain, the southwest corner of the island going to Libby, McNeil and Libby by 1936, with other parcels sold still later. (Sacramento County Assessor's Map Book, 1936; USBR, Report DL-5, 31).

Community Development

Towns or cities are rare in the lowland Delta region, with most situated on the Sacramento River, the area's commercial artery. The proximity to transportation, the river's natural levees and the trend toward early occupation in relatively small holdings near the river made community development more likely along the Sacramento River than at other Delta locations. Walnut Grove, one of the leading river towns, is on the Sacramento River at its junction with Georgiana Slough. Today the town is on both sides of the Sacramento River, but it originated on the eastern shore.

Walnut Grove owed its start to John Wesley Sharp, an Ohio native who came to California in 1849 and to the Walnut Grove vicinity in 1850 or 1851. He settled there, naming the site for three huge walnut trees growing nearby. His house, the first one in the incipient community, became the first hotel and he went on to found the first store, the first blacksmith shop and the first post office about 1857, with himself as first postmaster. He

owned a 360-acre farm in the area and was in the dairy business. (Reed, excerpt; Records of the Families of California Pioneers, 170). Sharp died in 1880 and his widow sold out to Mrs. Agnes Brown and her son Alexander. At that time the town boasted a wharf, a school with 25-30 scholars, an armory hall, the hotel, and bi-weekly Methodist services. A steam saw-mill established in 1877 had already gone out of business. (Thompson and West, 221). The mill apparently used logs rafted down the Mokelumne River to make fruit boxes. (Thompson, 427).

The Browns were destined to have a major impact on the little town. Alexander Brown assisted his mother in the hotel business for a couple of years before becoming a fruit buyer and store owner. Alex Brown's business interests expanded to include serving as Wells Fargo express agent and agent for the Southern Pacific's riverboats. His use of bank drafts and the granting of loans, sometimes without security for men he deemed good risks, led eventually to the formal organization of the Bank of Alex Brown in 1913. Brown was a major factor in the asparagus in the Delta. (Reed, excerpt; Elk Grove Citizen, supplement, Dec. 12-13, 1973).

Walnut Grove grew slowly. In 1911 the town had a hotel, schoolhouse, hall, church, post office, bakery and butcher's shop. There were two blacksmiths and two saloons and a "lodging house" as well as stores and wharves on the Sacramento River levee. There was also a "Chinatown" section and a Chinese Masonic Temple nearby. Aside from the closely packed buildings of Chinatown, Walnut Grove's businesses, homes and barns were scattered along the Sacramento River with none of them actually on Georgiana Slough proper. The Sacramento Southern Railroad had just reached the town and the ferry across the Sacramento River to Grand Island would soon be replaced by the first cantilever bridge west of the Mississippi. (Sacramento Southern Railroad, map, 1911; River News-Herald, reprint, 1966).

Walnut Grove's Chinatown was occupied primarily by laborers who worked the various island farms. Around the turn-of-the-century, Walnut Grove was apparently a way-station for the opium traffic conducted by the Bing Kong Tong. (Chu, 29-31). In October, 1915, Walnut Grove's Chinatown burned, prompting some of its residents to move elsewhere. A new, wholly-Chinese town was built north of Walnut Grove on land owned by George Locke. The town of Locke remains today one of the most interesting of the Delta settlements and one of the most historically significant. It lies outside the area affected by the hazard removal operations and is not properly the subject of this report.

Isleton, on the Sacramento River on Andrus Island, is also not in the area affected by the current project, but it may deserve mention nonetheless. It was laid out in 1875 by Josiah Pool, who built the first wharf at about the same time. The next

year the California Sugar Manufacturing Company was formed, but its Isleton plant failed to bring the town prosperity and it was closed following the flood of 1878. In the early twentieth century, asparagus canning plants operated in Isleton and the town served as a residential center. As in the case of Walnut Grove, Isleton's Chinese section housed agricultural workers, many of them transient. The decline of the asparagus canning industry along the Sacramento River was triggered by a shift in cropping patterns that relocated the asparagus district to the southern Delta. That shift, along with the end of the steamboat era and the Great Depression of the 1930's, threatened the town's future until World War II and the opening of improved State highways gave it another chance. (Isleton May Festival Committee, n.p.; Thompson, 429-430; Chu, 29).

Agriculture

(Source, except as noted: Bureau of Reclamation, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigations, Report Area DL-5).

It has been noted previously that somewhat smaller landholdings were more common along the Sacramento River than might be expected in many other parts of the Delta. The case of Andrus and Tyler islands seems to reinforce that assertion. Only in the planting of orchards, however, did the crop pattern along the Sacramento River deviate from the Delta norm. The orchard district extended along the Sacramento River from Hood to Walnut Grove near the river where higher land made fruit plantings possible. In the 1870's, peaches, pears, plums, cherries, figs, nectarines and other tree crops were grown along the river but rising water tables blamed on the rise of the Sacramento River bed due to the accumulation of mining debris made stone fruit production difficult. Pears did not suffer from the damper ground and that crop eventually became the almost exclusive Delta orchard crop. (Thompson, 359-360).

In the early twentieth century asparagus was perhaps the area's leading crop. By the mid-1920's, two-thirds of Andrus Island's cultivated acreage was devoted to asparagus and though the acreage began to decline in 1926, the crop remained important through the 1930's. As asparagus planting declined, more land was devoted to celery and fruit crops, both of which peaked in the late 1920's. Fruit growing, though it declined in the 1930's as rapidly as it had risen in the 1920's, continued to cover several hundred acres, primarily in pears. Since World War II, hay and grain and corn and milo have dominated the island's agricultural pattern, with tomatoes being added as a crop of some importance.

In the 1924-1932 period, asparagus was by far the most important crop on Tyler Island, covering 8,300 of the island's 9,000 acres in 1929. By 1938, asparagus acreage had begun to drop and by 1948 none was grown on the island. The decline in asparagus planting was matched by an increase in corn, milo, grain and hay so that by 1955, three-quarters of the island's acreage was planted in those field crops. Orchards covered 500 acres of Tyler Island

when accurate records were established in 1924, declining sharply to about 250 acres in 1928. In 1955 there were only 170 acres of orchards, primarily pears, on the island.

Transportation

Georgiana Slough provides a short-cut river route from Sacramento to Stockton, but the slough was too narrow and too full of snags to become a major commercial waterway. (Christensen interview; MacMullen, 67). Among other less noteworthy victims, Georgiana Slough claimed the Neponset No. 2 in November, 1921, the last of the large riverboats to be lost to snags. (MacMullen, 71). Although a three times weekly steamer used the waterway in 1858, through traffic avoided Georgiana Slough. (Thompson, 426). Even as a local transportation artery, the slough suffered by comparison with the Sacramento River and the North Fork of the Mokelumne River that offered alternatives to farmers on Andrus and Tyler islands. Where the option existed, a landing was usually located on one of the other streams and consequently there were fewer landings along Georgiana Slough. (Christensen interview). Landings were listed, by the California Transportation Company, for example (Bishops ABC Guide, 50-51), but as elsewhere in the Delta, the steamers and other craft stopped only when necessary. The landings themselves were usually simple affairs often consisting of no more than a portion of the bank cleared of trees and other obstructions. Brush landings were used in some places and steamboat and barge pilots often tied up to siphon guards or other incidental structures. The only major wharf complex on the slough may have been in the vicinity of the Golden State Asparagus Company cannery near the junction with the Mokelumne River. (Christensen interview). In general, then, Georgiana Slough was a waterway of primarily local importance and in that way typical of most of the Delta watercourses.

Two bridges carry vehicular traffic across the slough and both were once the site of ferries. At Walnut Grove, John Wesley Sharp established the first ferry linking his town with Andrus Island and by 1901 a bridge crossed Georgiana Slough at that point. (Thompson, 427). East of Isleton, Tyler Island Ferry was established to enhance access to that area after the turn-of-the-century. A 1922 report indicated that on the average, the ferry carried 75 cars daily and ten 5-ton trucks; traffic attributed in some measure to the opening of the river road to Sacramento. (Sacramento County Engineer, July 3, 1922). In 1940 the ferry was replaced by a swing bridge (Sacramento County, Division of Highways and Bridges).

Railroads, in general, avoided the central Delta, perhaps because of poor roadbed foundation conditions and because of the effectiveness of waterborne competition. The development of processing plants and towns along the Sacramento River, however, led to the construction of a railroad from Sacramento as far south as Isleton. The Sacramento Southern Railroad, a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific, reached Walnut Grove about 1911 where it terminated.

(Sacramento Southern, map, 1911). In the early 1930's, the line was extended to Isleton by way of Tyler Island and a bascule bridge over Georgiana Slough. (McCormack interview). From Isleton, a spur connected to the Golden State Asparagus Company on Georgiana Slough and to railroad wharf facilities in the vicinity. The railroad has since fallen into an inactive condition and the spur east of Isleton abandoned.

IV. SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

Objectives identified by State Lands Commission as subject to removal have been researched as fully as possible and evaluated as to their historic values and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The sites are numbered according to their location adjoining Andrus Island (AI) or Tyler Island (TI). Locations are numbered in a clockwise manner. State Lands Commission worked with U. S. Geological Survey topographical maps in locating the objects, but for ease of reproduction, the attached map of site locations is based on U. S. Bureau of Reclamation Plate 3, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigations, Report Area DL-5, January, 1964.

AI-1

Location:

Georgiana Slough near the junction with the Mokelumne River, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

A number of derelict pilings, most extending only a foot or two above the water surface, some in clusters but without clearly discernable pattern.

History:

By 1908, the Golden State Asparagus Company, formed in 1901, had located a cannery at the site. (USGS, map, 1908; California Transportation Company, map, 1917). The Company owned over 1,400 acres on Andrus Island and additional land on Sherman Island. The plant processed asparagus, beans, pears and peaches. (Byron Times, 1926-27, 124). Transportation for crops and finished products originally was provided by boats and barges, but in the 1930's the Sacramento Southern Railroad built a spur to the area from Isleton. In the late 1950's the area, long abandoned by the cannery, saw the installation of floating docks for recreational purposes. (Corps, permit file).

Evaluation:

The Golden State Asparagus Company cannery was one of the area's leading enterprises in the first several decades of the twentieth century and it featured extensive dockage facilities. (Christensen interview). The remaining pilings are probably the remnants of wharf structures or they may have supported buildings that may have extended out over the levee. The deteriorated condition of the remaining pilings and the loss of integrity at the location due to extensive subsequent development and the lack of any evidence that the Golden State cannery represented anything unique makes it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-2

Location:

Georgiana Slough just above the junction with the Mokelumne River, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

One small piling near the shore beside small siphon.

History:

Early maps identify the site as Watson's Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907) and two structures were located there in 1914. (Corps, map, 1914). The Corps of Engineers issued permits for dolphins and wharves to be built at the site in 1931 to the Southern Pacific Railroad and in 1936 to Holly Sugar Company. (Corps, permit file). Two docks, various pilings and several dolphins existed in 1949. (Corps, map, 1949). A copy fo a portion of the 1949 Corps of Engineers' map showing the site is appended to this report. It shows an arrangement typical of larger wharf facilities with dolphins to be used for mooring barges or other craft and rows of pilings designed to be used as fenders for the vessels. Barges were generally tied fore and aft to a windlass line and then pulled back and forth to spread the load. When they had been loaded, barges were often towed a short distance and moored again in order to make way for others. Although the site illustrated on the map does illustrate some features of wharf design found at the more substantial landings, it is unusual in that it has a rail connection that was rare in the Delta. The permitted wharf structures were scheduled for removal in 1976. (Corps, permit file). The piling at the site is probably a siphon guard.

Evaluation:

Although a loading dock, warehouse and grain elevator once existed at the site in conjunction with a railroad spur and well-developed wharf facilities, evidence of these features has disappeared. The remaining piling is probably a siphon guard of recent vintage and is not eligible for National Register of Historic Places.

AI-3

Location:

Georgiana Slough near the south end of the slough adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

State Lands Commission describes "piles" but on the June 6 inspection cruise no old pilings were located at the site. An attractive house on floats occupies the site.

History:

Old maps show the site as Jansen Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907) and it had four structures in 1914. (Corps, map, 1914). A 41-foot boathouse was permitted by the Corps of Engineers in 1963. (Corps, permit file).

Evaluation:

The absence of physical remains and lack of significant historical associations makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-4

Location:

Georgiana Slough, southern section adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

One piling extending above the water; others may be submerged nearby.

History:

Old maps show the site as Vroman's Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907) and in 1914, five structures occupied the site. (Corps, map, 1914). Andrus School was located nearby.

Evaluation:

The remaining piling or pilings may have been associated with the landing that once occupied the site. The site has no significant historical associations and is very badly deteriorated. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-5

Location:

Georgiana Slough, southern section, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

About 20 pilings in the vicinity of a modern floating dock.

History:

The location is near the spot where State Highway 12 from Isleton once met Georgiana Slough and then turned south along the slough. Upstream from the site, the Corps of Engineers noted a large pumping plant, several buildings and several dolphins in 1949. No pilings or structures were at the site of the present pilings. (Corps, map, 1949). A large pumping plant is just upstream from the site draining a large section of Andrus Island to the north of Isleton. The pumping plant dates from 1937. (Reclamation District No. 407 to Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, 1937). Wallace McCormack of Rio Vista identified the site as Gardiners Landing but ownership maps place the holdings of the Gardiner Improvement Company at the extreme northern edge of the site suggesting that perhaps the dolphins, now gone, on the 1949 map might have been the location of the landing (USBR, Report DL-5, 31).

Evaluation:

Although no firm evidence was uncovered regarding the pilings in question, the area had a major pump installation and probably a landing. It seems reasonable to assume that the pilings may have been associated with a landing. The lack of documentary evidence, the absence of significant historical associations and the deteriorated condition of the site should render it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-6

Location:

Georgiana Slough, south of the Tyler Island Bridge, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Sections of a single row of evenly spaced pilings.

History:

Wallace McCormack, local resident and former president of the State Reclamation Board, identified these pilings as levee reinforcement used to repair weak spots in the bank. Often brush was then piled behind the timbers. No documentaty evidence concerning the site was located.

Evaluation:

The identification of the remaining pilings as levee reinforcement seems plausible and is reinforced by the absence of conflicting documentary data. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-7

Location:

Georgiana Slough, south of Walnut Grove, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Remains of what appeared to be a single row of pilings.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). No documentary evidence on the site was located.

Evaluation:

The identification of the remaining pilings as levee reinforcement seems plausible and is reinforced by the absence of conflicting documentary data. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-8

Location:

Georgiana Slough, south of Walnut Grove, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Half a dozen or more pilings next to the levee, arranged in what may have been a single row.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). No documentary evidence on the site was located.

Evaluation:

If the remaining pilings were indeed part of a single row it seems likely that they were associated with undocumented levee reinforcement. The site is deteriorated and lacks significant historical associations. It should not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-9

Location:

Georgiana Slough, south of Walnut Grove, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Three piles, badly deteriorated.

History:

The only documentary evidence located regarding the site was a permit for a pump dated September 17, 1974, although it was apparently a pre-1968 structure. (Corps, permit file). Alternatively, the pilings could be associated with levee reinforcement work.

Evaluation:

Adequate information for a determination of the purpose of the pilings in question does not exist. However, neither of the suggested alternatives (pump site or levee reinforcement) is of historical significance. The site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-10

Location:

Georgiana Slough, south of Walnut Grove, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Several pilings, unevenly spaced but in what was probably a single row.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). No documentary evidence on the site was located.

Evaluation:

The identification of the remaining pilings as levee reinforcement seems plausible and is reinforced by the absence of conflicting documentary data. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-11

Location:

Georgiana Slough, just below Walnut Grove, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Four pilings in a row parallel to the levee.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). No documentary evidence on the site was located.

Evaluation:

The identification of the remaining pilings as levee reinforcement seems plausible and is reinforced by the absence of conflicting documentary data. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

AI-12

Location:

Georgiana Slough, nearly opposite of Walnut Grove, adjacent to Andrus Island.

Description:

Three pilings in a row parallel to the levee, almost submerged.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). No documentary evidence on the site was located.

Evaluation:

The identification of the remaining pilings as levee reinforcement seems plausible and is reinforced by the absence of conflicting documentary data. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-1

Location:

Georgiana Slough at junction with the Mokelumne River, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

Numerous pilings, some arranged as a bulkhead.

History:

The site was known as Vorman's Landing, probably a misspelling of "Voorman", a major landowner on Bouldin and Tyler Islands at the turn-of-the-century. (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907; California Transportation Company, map, 1917). According to Wallace McCormack, the site was developed about 1902 and Voorman's house was moved there from Bouldin Island by barge. Principal structures in the water were a boathouse that burned in the 1940's and a bulkhead made of 12 x 12 inch redwood posts that was used as a landing for barges loading grain and as levee protection. (McCormack interview). In 1949, there was a two-story house, an abandoned house, several equipment sheds and a small warehouse at the site. (Corps, map, 1949).

Evaluation:

Although the site was once the home of one of the leading figures in the area in the early twentieth century it was apparently not a major commercial center. The landing was solidly built, but there was no evidence that it was associated with packing sheds or warehouses. The structures at the site have disappeared and the pilings themselves are in a deteriorated condition. It is also

possible that the levee has been set back, changing the relationship of the pilings to the shore. The condition of the site and the fact that it is without outstanding historical significance make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-2

Location:

Georgiana Slough, north of Tyler Island Bridge, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

State Lands Commission describes "piles" but none were located in this vicinity on the inspection cruise of June 6, 1978.

History:

The site was known as W. F. Wise Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907, 1913), as Cole Ranch (California Transportation Company, map, 1917), or as Wilcox Landing (Rideout, map, 1910). No more recent information was located.

Evaluation:

The apparent absence of physical remains and the lack of any significant historical associations makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-3

Location:

Georgiana Slough, north of Tyler Island Bridge, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

State Lands Commission describes "piles" but none were located in this vicinity on the inspection cruise of June 6, 1978.

History:

The site was once known as Winter's Landing (Punnet Bros., maps, 1901, 1907, 1913). Several structures existed near the site. (USGS, map, 1908; Corps, map, 1914).

Evaluation:

The apparent absence of physical remains and the lack of any significant historical associations makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-4

Location:

Georgiana Slough, northern section, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

Nine pilings; five in a short row and the others more or less in line with that row.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). No documentary evidence on the site was located.

Evaluation:

The identification of the remaining pilings as levee reinforcement seems plausible and is reinforced by the absence of conflicting documentary data. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-5

Location:

Georgiana Slough, northern section, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

Several pilings, most arranged in pairs extending out from the levee.

History:

Wallace McCormack and Bud Christensen identified the site as the remains of a wing dam, probably constructed of pilings, brush and rock designed to force the current to the center of the stream, scouring the channel. A copy of a portion of the plans for a similar wing dam is appended to this report.

Although such structures were not uncommon, their effectiveness seems to have been limited. The dam in question was probably built in the 1920's. (McCormack and Christensen interviews; Corps, wing dam plans, 1912).

Evaluation:

Wing dams were constructed in an effort to maintain navigable channels and the pilings at this site were probably used in such a dam. The dam was not unique and had no outstanding historical associations. It should not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-6

Location:

Georgiana Slough, just below Walnut Grove, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

Three pilings in line near the bank, almost submerged.

History:

A single row of pilings was often associated with levee reinforcement work and brush was sometimes piled behind them. (McCormack interview). The land adjacent to the site was once owned by Sperry Dye, a grandson of Walnut Grove founder John W. Sharp and a small structure once existed on the slough side of the levee. (Corps, map, 1933).

Evaluation:

If the structure noted on the 1933 map extended over the water, the pilings may have helped support it. Alternatively, the pilings could have been used as levee reinforcement. In either case the site has no outstanding historical significance and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-7

Location:

Georgiana Slough at Walnut Grove, adjacent to Tyler Island

Description:

Seven pilings in a row.

History:

A small structure was once located on the slough side of the levee. (Corps, map, 1933). A single row of pilings may also be associated with levee reinforcement work.

Evaluation:

The only evidence of a structure was on the 1933 map. If the structure extended over the water, the pilings may have helped support it. Alternatively, the pilings could have been used as levee reinforcement. In either case, the site has no outstanding historical significance and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-8

Location:

Georgiana Slough just below Walnut Grove Bridge, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

Ten or more pilings in a single row near a maintained floating dock.

History:

A structure that may have extended to the water is shown on a 1933 map (Corps, map, 1933), while by 1951, a small landing was at the site. (Corps, map, 1951). The placement of pilings in a single row may suggest their use as levee reinforcing as well.

Evaluation:

The remaining pilings may have been associated with a levee-side structure or with levee reinforcement. In any event, no information was uncovered that would suggest that the site has any significant historical associations. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

TI-9

Location:

Georgiana Slough above the Walnut Grove Bridge, adjacent to Tyler Island.

Description:

Floating wooden structures resembling decayed portions of floating docks. Deterioration is such that positive identification is impossible.

History:

In 1931 and 1951, a slough-side building of unknown purpose

existed. (USC&GS, map, 1931; Corps, map, 1951). Since 1964, several floating docks or boathouses have been authorized by the Corps of Engineers for that area. (Corps, permit file). Wallace McCormack remembered that fishermen sometimes lived in houseboats in the area.

Evaluation:

It seems most likely that the debris observed is of recent origin, probably the remains of a derelict floating dock or boathouse. The objects are without any apparent historical value and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

V. CONCLUSION

Objects identified as scheduled for removal by the State Lands Commission have been researched and evaluated in terms of their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places to determine whether or not they should in fact be removed. When objects identified by the State Lands Commission were not located by on-site inspection, research was necessarily limited to the general characteristics of the site.

Georgiana Slough is, and has been, an unusually well-maintained waterway in large part because of its inclusion in the Sacramento River Flood Control Project. For that reason, there are frequent examples of levee reinforcement work while other structures that may once have existed have been removed or have had their character altered by levee maintenance work. The hazards of navigating Georgiana Slough also limited the number of landings along its banks. The only landings of any importance on the slough were located near its junction with the Mokelumne River at and near the Golden State Asparagus Company cannery, but little remains of these wharves and the appearance of the area has undergone a marked change as a result of recreational development. None of the objects scheduled for removal in Georgiana Slough are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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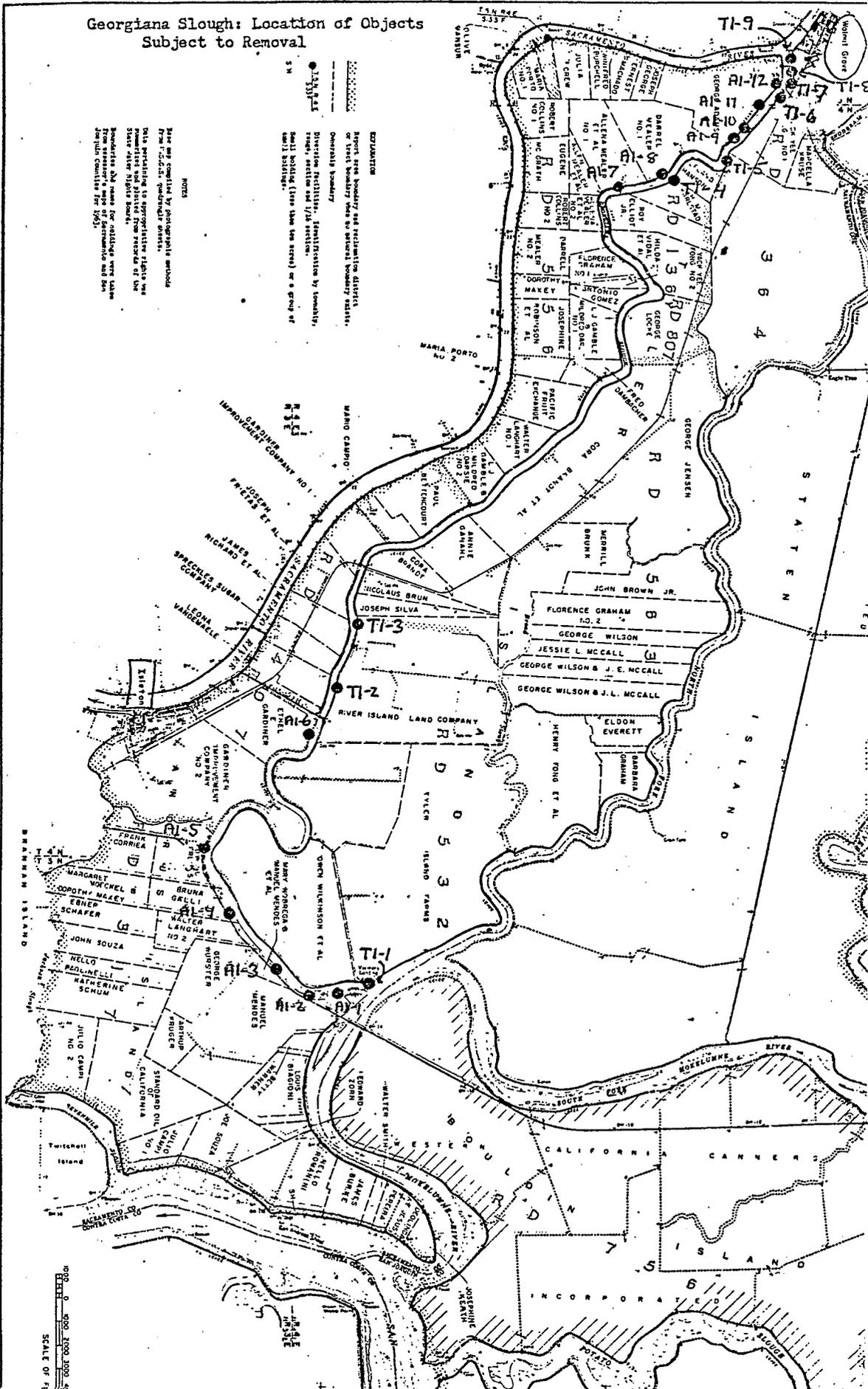
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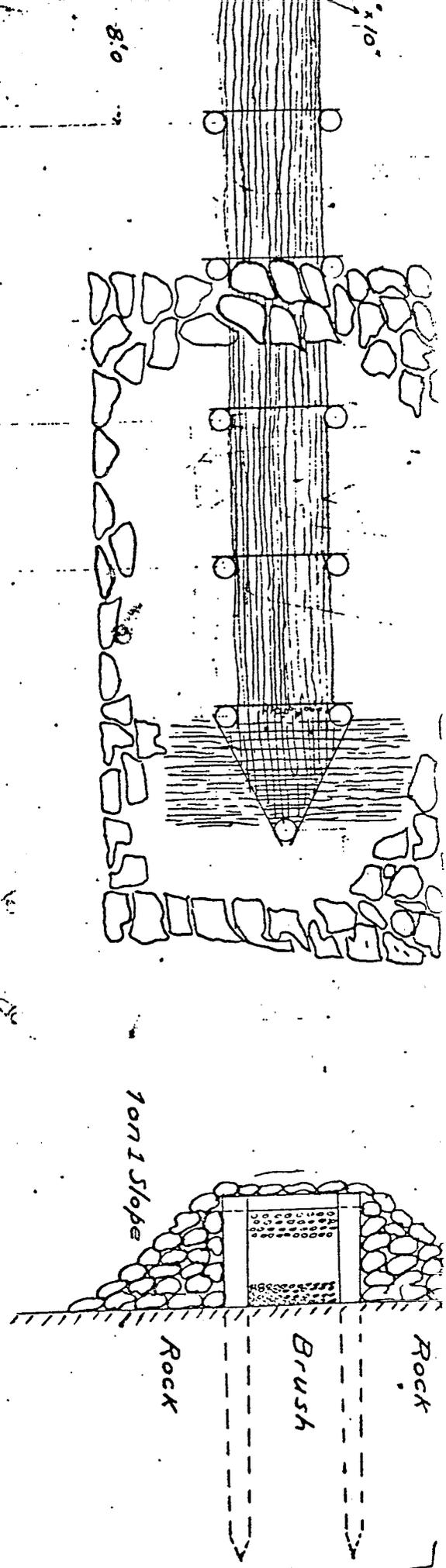
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HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 3

Georgiana Slough: Location of Objects Subject to Removal





Brush laid parallel with current.

Typical Wing Dam Plans

1912

Corps of Engineers

*Proposed Rock Protection for
Sacramento River Wing Dams.*

HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 4

Prepared for the State Lands Commission

Alan M. Paterson
Rand F. Herbert
Stephen R. Wee

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Lands Commission is in the process of removing navigation hazards from Delta waterways. In order to comply with federal regulations and to insure that items of historic importance are not removed or damaged, these studies have been commissioned.

II. LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF REPORT AREA

This report deals with Old River, a branch of the San Joaquin River, from the point where it rejoins the main channel of the San Joaquin to Indian Slough. It also deals with waterways adjacent to Old River where relevant to the project. The report area lies in San Joaquin and Contra Costa counties, the original channel of Old River forming the boundary between the two. Reclamation has resulted in significant changes in the geography of Old River and its adjacent islands, with the damming of some sloughs and the opening of new cuts.

Old River, at a point south of the report area, serves the pumps of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project and the California Department of Water Resources' State Water Project. Under certain conditions the net flow in Old River can be reversed due to the pull of the federal and state pumps. The Contra Costa Canal, a unit of the Central Valley Project, takes its water from Old River via Rock Slough.

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF LANDS IN THE REPORT AREA

Land Ownership and Reclamation

As has been noted in previous reports in this series and in the overview, the successful reclamation of the lowland Delta depended on the application of substantial capital, often following the consolidation of ownership of the various islands and tracts. The basic progression of Delta development saw four general periods; initial sales, preliminary consolidation by outside capitalists, post-1900 corporate consolidation and reclamation, and finally, the resale of land to smaller corporate holdings and individuals. That pattern occurred in most of the Delta region, the principal exception being along the Sacramento River. (see Report No. 3, Georgiana Slough) The current report area provides an excellent illustration of the typical sequence of Delta development.

Land sales were made first to numerous individuals who claimed several hundred acres of the unreclaimed swamplands apiece. (Index Map, San Joaquin County, map, 1862) Although attempts at levee construction were often made, these relatively small landowners of approximately 100 to 300 acres lacked the capital and organization to fully reclaim their lands, even with the assistance of the state's Board of Swamp Land Commissioners that operated in the early 1860s.

The late 1860s and the succeeding decades saw a new force in Delta reclamation -- the large scale reclaimer/speculator. Men whose fortunes were made in the Gold Rush era in California and in the Comstock Lode of Nevada invested in Delta land and reclamation as a type of speculation. Among the important, and representative, owners of land in the period 1870 1900 in the report area were Serranus Clinton Hastings, Thomas Hansford Williams and his partner David Bixler, John Coffee Hays, William T. Coleman, Sherman Day, and Henry D. Bacon.

S. C. Hastings was born in New York state in 1814, moving to Indiana twenty years later to begin a legal practice. He moved west again in 1837 to what became the state of Iowa, eventually serving as that territory's representative in Congress where he knew and served with John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln, and as the Chief Justice of the new state in 1848 (Johnson, 18; S.F. Call, Feb. 19, 1893) He resigned the following year to join the California migration and was named Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. In 1851 he was elected Attorney General of California. His private legal practice proved profitable, especially in the handling of cases involving contested Mexican land grants where fees were often paid in real estate. Hastings was also involved in banking and bought land in various areas besides the Delta, including the town of Benicia in the hope that it would regain the state capitol. What were termed his "judicious land investments" (S.F. Call, September 8, 1890) increased his wealth to an estimated \$2.5 million by 1864. A portion of his wealth endowed the University of California's Hastings School of Law. (S.F. Call, September 8, 1890; S.F. Call, Feb. 19, 1893; Johnson, 9-26) As early as 1870 Hastings owned land on Bacon and Mandeville islands. (San Joaquin County, map, 1870) In 1877 Hastings told a Congressional committee that he had invested over \$50,000 in reclamation on various tracts using Chinese laborers, despite the fact that he characterized them as "a fungus, a foreign substance, an unhealthy substance." (Report of Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 588, 590)

T. H. Williams and David Bixler both arrived in California at the height of the Gold Rush. Williams came to the state in 1850, as captain of an overland wagon train. He settled, mined and ranched and dabbled in local politics, first as a Whig and then as a Democrat, in El Dorado County. Failing to find sufficient success, he moved to Sacramento and began a law practice with Frank Hereford in 1861. (H. H. Bandroft Collection, n.p., 1886) David Bixler, the son of a Maryland tobacco merchant, came to San Francisco via Panama in 1853 or 1855 and joined a legal firm in that city, where he remained until 1863. The Comstock excitement lured both Williams and Bixler

across the Sierras to Virginia City where they met and established a partnership with Williams the senior partner. They "were engaged in much of the heavy litigation that finally settled all conflicting titles in the Comstock Lode." (Bancroft Collection, n.p., 1886) When one of their clients in 1871 was unable to meet their fee they took over an inactive mine as compensation; a mine reportedly termed "barren ground" by geologist Clarence King. In 1873 Williams and Bixler's holdings were incorporated into the California Mine that sat astride the great bonanza. The partners made over \$4,000,000 on the mine and an additional \$2,000,000 on other investments. They sold out and left Nevada in 1875 after Williams lost a bid to become U. S. Senator from that state to William Sharon. Their profits from the Comstock were invested in 110,000 acres of Delta real estate, including portions of Webb Tract, Holland Tract, Orwood Tract in the report area as well as Union Island and extensive properties in the Sacramento River Delta. A substantial portion of this land was purchased from the Tide Land Reclamation Company, itself a creature of mining capital. (Irwin, 8-11; Pacific Coast Mining Review, 1878-79, 39-40; Press Reference Library, 419) Williams and Bixler did not reclaim all their land and it would appear that their operations were centered on Union Island and perhaps on Grand Island along the Sacramento River.

John Coffee Hays owned land on Mandeville Island in the early 1870s through the early 1880s. Born in Tennessee, Hays went to Texas where he was a founder and early commander of the Texas Rangers during the era of the Texas Republic. It was Hays and his Indian-fighting irregulars who first popularized the use of Colt's revolver. (Webb, 167, 173-175) Hays came to California in 1849 and was promptly elected sheriff of San Francisco. In 1852 he was, with John Caperton, among the purchasers of land that became the city of Oakland and in 1853 he was appointed U.S. Surveyor General for California. (S.F. Call, April 22, 1883) In 1872 Hays built "a new and comfortable house on Mandeville Island." (Sacramento Union, April 2, 1873) Navigation charts still show a Hayes Point on northwestern Mandeville Island and older maps indicate a "Hays Landing" on the northeastern section of the island bordering the main channel of the San Joaquin River. (Punnett Bros., map, 1907)

William T. Coleman, in partnership with railroad speculator H. B. Tichenor, owned considerable acreage on Mandeville and Bacon islands, though he apparently did little to reclaim the tracts. Coleman, whose wealth was derived from mercantile enterprises, was best remembered as a leading member of the San Francisco vigilante committees of 1851 and 1856. (Dictionary of American Biography, 295-296; San Joaquin County, Plat Books, 1877-78)

Sherman Day, born in 1805 in Connecticut, came to California in 1849 and devoted his time to civil engineering in San Francisco. He was elected to the state senate in 1854 and 1856, was U. S. Surveyor General for California in 1868, and served on the Railroad Commission at the same time. In the early 1870s Day purchased 1,000 acres of land on Bacon Island, where he erected a "comfortable home" and divided his time between his Oakland house and his Delta holdings. Maps show a "Day's Landing" on Bacon Island on Old River across the channel from present-day Rhode Island. (Sacramento Union April 2, 1873; Punnett Bros., map, 1907)

Henry D. Bacon was late-comer to California, not arriving in person until 1883, although the banking house of Page and Bacon had been in California from the discovery of gold to its failure in the 1850's. Bacon, and after his death in 1893 the Bacon Land and Loan Company, controlled the largest part of Mandeville and Bacon islands in the 1890s and early twentieth century. (Oakland Engquirer, Feb. 20, 1893.)

The preceding short biographies have been given to provide some insight into the kind of men who held Delta lands in the nineteenth century. They were by-and-large men who had prospered directly or indirectly from mining in California and the Comstock. They often had political ambitions. As land owners they sometimes developed their properties although none of the lands in the current report area were fully reclaimed by 1900. Webb Tract, for example, was leveed between 1870 and 1873 but flooding in 1873 caused its abandonment until the twentieth century. (USBR, Report DL-7, 10) Other areas were little more prosperous and closely reflected the Webb Tract experience. The capitalists treated the Delta lands as investments or speculations rather than as farms or as permanent homes. It is not too much to apply Frank Norris' description of a San Joaquin Valley wheat king to the nineteenth century land barons of the Delta.

At the very bottom, when all was said and done, Magnus remained the Forty-niner... For all his public spirit, for all his championship of justice and truth, his respect for the law, Magnus remained the gambler, willing to play for colossal stakes, to hazard a fortune on the chance of winning a million. It was the true California spirit that found expression through him.... It was in this frame of that Magnus and the multitude of other ranchers of whom he was a type, farmed their ranches. They had no love of the land. They were not attached to the soil.

(Norris, 198)

The next generation of Delta entrepreneurs, the third series of actors in the progression of Delta development, arrived about the turn-of-the-century, consolidating through corporate purchases vast tracts of Delta acreage and reclaiming them. The financial backing for these ventures came in large measure from Los Angeles fortunes made in insurance and real estate, and men connected with Delta reclamation also sat on the boards of directors of large southern California companies, including the Union Oil Company and Southern California Edison (Hunt, pp. 76, 81; Who in L. A. County, pp. 34, 46).

The three most prominent names were those of Frederick Hastings Rindge, George Ira Cochran, and Lee A. Phillips. Rindge, Son of a wealthy New England wsolen merchant, inherited a \$2 million estate in 1883. He then bought the Malibu Rancho and moved to California in 1887. The rancho extended for 25 miles along the southern California coastline. The Rindge interests also became involved in the Union Oil Company and Southern

California Edison (Robinson, p. 24; Hunt, p. 81).. Cochran and Phillips were both trained as lawyers, and arrived in Los Angeles in the early 1890s. Having established a law firm in 1893 specializing in corporate matters. Cochran was joined in 1894 by Phillips. The firm proved successful and in 1900 the men worked with Rindge to form the Conservative Life Insurance Company which later was to merge with the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1906. (The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, v. 28 p. 331, V. 37 p. 218; articles of Incorporation, Conservative Life Insurance Company) At about this time Phillips became interested in the reclamation of swamplands after receiving swampland in the Old Cieneba Rancho in lieu of a fee. He traveled to Holland to study reclamation methods and later successfully drained his property (National Cyclopedia of American Biography, v. 28, p. 331). In 1902, Rindge, Cochran, Phillips and other directors of the Conservative Life Insurance Company organized the Middle River Navigation and Canal Company (articles of incorporation, Middle River Navigation and Canal Company). This organization, the predecessor of the Rindge Land and Navigation Company, purchased and reclaimed over 25,000 acres of tule land in the San Joaquin Delta, including Palm Tract (National Cyclopedia of American Biography, v. 16 p. 342).

Phillips, in order to personally supervise Delta reclamation activities, moved to Stockton in 1902. He quickly enlarged the scope of his activities, and by 1905 he was secretary of the newly organized Rindge Land and Navigation Company, and in 1912 he became president of California Delta Farms Inc. (See articles of Incorporation, Rindge Land & Navigation Co., Empire Navigation Co., California Delta Farms, Inc.). By 1914, California Delta farms held 42,000 acres of Delta land (Byron Times, 1914-15, p. 93). Besides Orwood Tract, the company owned Holland Tract, reclaimed in 1910, Webb Tract, reclaimed in 1912, and Mandeville and Bacon islands, both reclaimed in 1914, in addition to lands outside the current report area.

Financial backing for Phillips' ventures came primarily from Los Angeles - based institutions and financiers, centered mostly among directory and officials of the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company. Prominent among these men were Phillips' former law partner Cochran, as well as Isaac Milbank, John Barnes Miller, and Albert J. Wallace. These same names appear on the Boards of Directors of several turn-of-the-century Delta reclamation companies (Moore, p. 176-177; Nunis, p. 75-77; articles of Incorporation, Empire Land and Navigation Company, California Delta Farms Inc., Middle River Navigation and Canal Company). This should not be surprising, considering Phillips' position as Chief Investment Officer and Executive Vice President of the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, 1906-1933. According to Doyle B. Nunts, historian of the company, Phillips was "an astute and sophisticated financier" under whose guidance Pacific Mutual enjoyed rapid and prosperous expansion (Nunis, p. 35)

The only major islands in the report area not held by Rindge or Phillips interests were Woodward Island and Franks Tract. Franks Tract was reclaimed between 1902 and 1906 by Frank Brothers dredging company. It was subdivided and sold immediately but it was inundated in 1907 and in 1936 and 1938. Cultivation of the island was abandoned in 1938 and today Franks Tract is still submerged. (USBR, Report DL-7, 12; Byron Times, 1912, 27) Woodward

Island was reclaimed in 1902, its northern margin being the Santa Fe Railway borrow pits that effectively formed a new cut when the railroad embankment was constructed. The island was owned by O. Y. Woodward and W. A. Wolf, an investor-farmer and a commission merchant respectively. Wolf apparently maintained a connection with the Phillips' group through George Shima, the Japanese-born potato king who was a Phillips associate. Wolf marketed Shima's fancy potatoes exclusively and managed the Los Angeles potato trade as well. (Byron Times, 1912, 79)

Several minor islands were reclaimed in the report area. Quinby Island was reclaimed in 1913 and farmed with the usual variety of Delta crops. It was purchased about the time of its reclamation by W. H. Wright and F. A. Quinby who operated it until the 1930s when it was sold to the Kofod family. (Contra Costa County, map, 1914; Corps, permit file) Rhode Island, a tract of not over 150 tillable acres was reclaimed in the 1920s and by the Wright Corporation and farmed by the Hunt-Hatch Company for a short time until 1938 when it was abandoned for agriculture and turned into a duck club. (USBR, Report DL-7, 13, 45; Byron Times, 1926-27, 194; Fallman interview; Busalacci interview)

Operations on the lands of California Delta Farms, the Rindge interests, Woodward Island and elsewhere were conducted primarily by tenants, often Japanese or Chinese, under crop mortgage or lease agreements. Camps were provided by the island owners and other equipment might be provided, depending on the terms of the agreement. An example of such an agreement is in the Williams manuscript collection at the California Historical Society, dated 1914. Under the agreement, 35 percent of the crop was to be taken by the landowner, while other provisions covered the maintenance of the levees and dates and delivery locations for the crops. (Williams Collection, n.p.)

Lee Phillips eventually lost control of California Delta Farms as a result of accusations that he was undervaluing Delta lands. He continued to operate under the name of Lee Phillips, Inc. and through Productive Properties, LTD, which originally controlled eight or nine tracts, some of which had belonged to California Delta Farms. (Fallman interview) The relationship between the various corporate entities is at this date uncertain. In August, 1937, Productive Properties LTD. reduced its capital stock from 2.4 to .37 million dollars by retiring its preferred and common stock, exchanging to willing stockholders one acre of its delta property for one share of stock. (Articles of Incorporation, Productive Properties, Ltd; Fallman interview) By October, 1938, California Delta Farms controlled what was left of Productive Properties, Ltd. land holdings. The combined acreage totalled about 22,000 acres with over 15,000 in the name of Productive Properties, Ltd. (Rural Observer, Sept/Oct. 1938, 10-11) Throughout the early 1940s, CDF officers slowly wound down business operations by annually reducing that corporations capital stock. The company was legally dissolved on June 10, 1948. (Articles of Incorporation, California Delta Farms)

This pattern is reflective of the fourth and final phase of Delta development: the dissolution of the massive reclamation enterprises. The leveeing

and breaking of the islands had required tremendous capital and the consolidation of smaller holdings that could have hampered the reclamation process. By the 1930s and 1940s the necessity for the huge organizations like California Delta Farms had passed. The investors in reclamation reaped the profits of their work by selling the land to other farmers and companies in units that ranged in size from whole islands to smaller acreages suitable for agricultural or commercial uses.

Agriculture

(Source, except as noted: Bureau of Reclamation, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigations, Report Areas DL-7, DL-8)

For the most part the islands and tracts in the report area were not permanently reclaimed until the early twentieth century. Nineteenth century agriculture was therefore necessarily non-intensive when it could be practiced at all. Grain, California's nineteenth century agricultural bonanza, was probably the predominant crop and livestock could have been run on the marshy islands.

On Mandeville Island, potatoes were the major crop in the 1920s; a fact that can be explained partially by potato grower George Shima's control of the island after 1922 when he traded King Island and an unspecified amount of cash to Lee Phillips in exchange for Mandeville (Rogers, July 22, 1951). In 1930 and 1931 corn and milo shared the spotlight with potatoes. After World War II asparagus, hay and grain were the major Mandeville Island crops with half the island in asparagus by the mid 1950s. Bacon Island was similar to Mandeville Island except that potatoes continued to be an important crop on the tract. Asparagus rose in importance on Bacon Island in the 1940s and by 1955 2,400 acres of the island's 5,600 acres were planted to asparagus.

Woodward Island was interesting in that crop statistics beginning in 1924 show that the island's available land has seldom been fully utilized. In 1924, for example, only 640 of the 2,000 available acres were used for agriculture. Potatoes were the leading crop on Woodward Island in the 1920s while corn and milo became more important thereafter. Asparagus was extensively grown there earlier in the twentieth century but by the 1920s cultivation of the crop had ceased. Asparagus planting began again in the 1940s and continued to grow modestly in the early 1950s. (Byron Times, 1908-1909, 25)

Orwood Tract grew some asparagus since the beginning of crop records in 1924 but like the southern Delta in general the acreage devoted to that crop increased dramatically in the 1940s and by 1955 three-quarters of the island was in asparagus. Asparagus had been grown in the 1910 era after Lee Phillips induced Robert Hickmott to move his asparagus canning operation to Orwood Tract from flooded Bouldin Island. Phillips' Chinese tenants proved to be better gardeners than businessmen when they planted the crop

in wider spaced rows than normal. They were rewarded with finer plants but the yield per acre dropped below profitable levels. Asparagus culture on Orwood Tract was drastically reduced as a result, forcing Hickmott to import asparagus from other parts of the Delta. (Fallman interview)

On Holland Tract, potatoes were planted sporadically during the 1920s but on substantial acreages when they were grown. Corn and milo reached a peak of importance in 1931 while thereafter grain and hay held a leading position until widespread asparagus planting occurred in the 1940s.

Webb Tract, at the northern boundary of the report area, was planted to asparagus at the same time as the islands near the Sacramento River to the north. Asparagus acreage dropped in the late 1920s and sugar beets were temporarily substituted as a major crop. Sugar beets continued to be planted sporadically and potatoes were planted in the 1930s, but corn and milo and grain and hay have been the island's leading crops.

Corn and milo and then grain and hay dominated Palm Tract until the 1940s and 1950s when asparagus was planted. In 1955 asparagus accounted for almost all the tract's 2,500 acres.

Franks Tract grew corn and milo along with onions and potatoes. Asparagus was planted in the 1930s until the island was permanently flooded in 1938.

The basic pattern that emerges is one of asparagus culture early in the history of some of the reclaimed islands, an emphasis on potatoes in the 1920s and a concentration of the asparagus industry in the southern Delta beginning in the 1940s. At all times, grain, corn, milo and hay were important Delta stable crops.

Transportation

Waterborne transportation provided the only means of communication until the 1920s in most of the report area and some of the islands east of Old River still have only ferry service to link them to the mainland. Being away from population centers, the large passenger-carrying steamboats avoided the southern Delta but the more mundane, work-a-day paddle wheelers were seen there as elsewhere in the Delta. Later, mail boats and motor launches made regular trips among the islands and tracts. For the movement of bulky cargo barges apparently played an important role and in fact several barges of mid-twentieth century vintage are abandoned in Old River and adjacent sloughs.

In common with the rest of the Delta each camp or farm could be expected to have its own landing. The landings, however, varied widely in type with some having well-built wharves, while at others spots incidental pilings like siphon guards would be used to tie up boats and barges. For

example, Irish Landing on southeastern Franks Tract had "spring piles" and planking that extended out from the levee. (Busalacci interview)

The Santa Fe Railway built a line through the report area in 1903-1905 separating Woodward Island from Bacon Island and Palm Tract from Orwood Tract had a spur built to it from that line. Opposite the cannery a 1,000 foot long wharf was built to facilitate transfers from barges to railroad cars. (Fallman interview)

There are no bridges over Old River in the report area except the railroad bridge at Orwood. Tracts to the west of Old River are all connected to the mainland by bridges or causeways, except Webb Tract which still depends on ferry service.

IV. SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

Objects identified by State Lands Commission as subject to removal have been researched as fully as possible and evaluated as to their historic values and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The sites are numbered according to their location adjoining Bacon Island (BNI), Franks Tract (FT), Holland Tract (HT), Mandeville Island (MI), Orwood Tract (OT), Palm Tract (PT), Rhode Island (RHI), Woodward Island (WI) and Webb Tract (WT). Locations are numbered in a clockwise manner. State Lands Commission worked with U. S. Geological Survey topographical maps in locating the objects but for ease of reproduction the attached map of site locations is based on navigation charts prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, April 1977 revision.

BNI-1

Location: Berms in Old River adjacent to northwest corner of Bacon Island.

Description: Four duckblinds

History: Duck blinds in the Delta are lightly built structures not expected to survive for long. Leo Fallman, long time Delta resident, estimates that such blinds are less than ten years old.

Evaluation: The sites are of recent origin and are without historical significance.

BNI-2

Location: Old River adjacent to the western edge of Bacon Island, opposite Holland Tract.

Description: Dolphins.

History: Although just south of Camp 4 on Bacon Island, the dolphins were associated with a Pacific Gas and Electric overhead powerline. The current power at that location was permitted in 1952, the dolphins having helped support a predecessor. (Corps, permit file)

Evaluation: The dolphins are of relatively recent vintage and have no historical significance sufficient to justify their preservation.

BNI-3

Location: Old River adjacent to the western edge of Bacon Island.

Description: One piling.

History: The site is the location of the Bacon Island pump house, from which ditches extend to the whole island for the regulation of crop water. Modern pumping equipment is located in the vicinity. Pumps were in operation at the site as early as 1936. (Corps, map, 1936) The piling probably served as pump protection.

Evaluation: The pump protection piling lacks significant historical associations sufficient to justify its entry in the National Register of Historic Places.

BNI-4

Location: Old River adjacent to Bacon Island, opposite the mouth of Rock Slough.

Description: Numerous 4 x 4 inch piles by a tule berm once connected to Bacon Island.

History: Although the location was once known as Bacon's Landing (Stockton-Bellota Drainage District, map, 1894), the pilings do not resemble those usually found at landings. Tony Busalacci stated that such light pilings were used in connection with early "Chinese levees" to prevent sections of the light peat levees from floating away. Bacon Island, and neighboring Mandeville Island, were leveed in 1872 although flooding forced their abandonment in 1874. (USBR, Report DL-8, 5-6) Levees constructed at that time closely followed the original river bank along Old River and a 1911 map confirms that prior to reclamation by California Delta Farms the present berms were part of Bacon Island. (USGS, map, 1911) Reclamation, undertaken in 1913, reshaped the island and erected a new levee inside the old island line, thus creating the present berm.

Evaluation: The piles are located along the edge of pre-1913 Bacon Island at the probable site of early levee construction attempts. The appearance of the surviving piles and evidence from maps supports the identification of these pilings as levee reinforcement. They are a reminder of early-day

reclamation methods when Chinese laborers built the first levees from the porous peat soil; levees that had to be secured with light pilings to prevent their rapid deterioration. For this reason, and because the site offers graphic illustration of the manner in which subsequent reclamation altered Delta geography by the relocation of the island boundary, the pilings at site BNI-4 may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and should not be disturbed by hazard removal operations.

BNI-5

Location: Old River adjacent to the southwest section of Bacon Island.

Description: Several almost submerged pilings, apparently 4 x 4 inch, at the tip of a berm.

History: The pilings are similar to those discussed above at site BNI-4. They are probably levee reinforcement pilings driven to prevent the peat levees from floating away and may date from the 1870s. For additional comments regarding the reclamation history of Bacon Island, see the discussion of site BNI-4.

Evaluation: As in the case of BNI-4, pilings that offer a reminder of early reclamation methods and the changes in island boundaries that resulted from subsequent reclamation efforts may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and should be left intact.

BNI-6

Location: Old River adjacent to the southwest section of Bacon Island.

Description: Pilings.

History: The location was near Bacon Island camp no. 1 and also near a ferry landing connecting Bacon Island with Fay Island, a small reclaimed parcel in Old River. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936) Ferry permits for the area were granted as recently as 1952 and 1961. (Corps, permit file)

Evaluation: The pilings may have been associated with a camp landing or a ferry site but more precise identification is impossible. In either event, the site lacks the significant historical associations required for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

BNI-7

Location: Old River adjacent to the southwest section of Bacon Island.

Description: Derelict small dock consisting of a walkway supported by light pilings.

History: Bacon Island camp no. 1 was in the vicinity in the 1930s. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936) No other information regarding the site was located.

Evaluation: Although camp no. 1 was nearby the dock appears rather modern, making a positive identification nearly impossible. The lack of suitable documentary information, the absence of significant historical associations and the questionable age of the structure make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

FT-1

Location: Eastern margin of Franks Tract adjacent to Old River.

Description: Three pilings in a row.

History: Located in the general vicinity of Browns Landing (Corps, map, 1936), the pilings now visible were probably used as levee reinforcement in an attempt to save Franks Tract from inundation. These efforts failed and the island has been under water since 1938.

Evaluation: These levee reinforcement pilings stand by themselves for even the levee has now disappeared. Levee reinforcement pilings are common in the Delta and these particular pilings lack the significant historical associations or interpretative value necessary to justify their inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

FT-2

Location: Eastern margin of Franks Tract adjacent to Old River.

Description: Two pilings.

History: Like the pilings at site FT-1, these two were probably levee reinforcement used in the unsuccessful effort to save Franks Tract. No landing appears to have occupied the site although Fletchers Landing was in the general vicinity. (Thomas Bros., map, 1933)

Evaluation: As in the case of site FT-1, the pilings lack the significant historical associations or interpretative value necessary to justify their inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

HT-1

Location: Holland Cut adjacent to northeast section of Holland Tract.

Description: Approximately seven pilings, all but one closely spaced perhaps ten feet from the levee.

History: Camp 7 on Holland Tract was located near the site. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936; Thomas Bros, map, 1942) A beet dump having a wharf and dolphins was permitted for construction by the American Crystal Sugar Company of Clarksburg in 1936. (Corps, permit file)

Evaluation: The remaining pilings could be the remains of either the camp landing or the beet dump but the deteriorated condition of the site makes the identification of the exact purpose of the pilings impossible. The site lacks significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HT-3

Location: Old River adjacent to east central Holland Tract.

Description: Double row of perhaps twenty substantial pilings. A tide gauge is at the site and a walkway extends onto some of the pilings out to the gauge.

History: The site is located slightly south of Holland Tract camp no. 4 (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936; Thomas Bros, map, 1942) No other information on the site was located.

Evaluation: The arrangement and condition of the pilings indicates that they might have been part of a well constructed wharf structure, probably one associated with the camp no. 4 landing. The site has no significant historical associations and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HT-4

Location: Old River adjacent to southeastern Holland Tract.

Description: Piles.

History: The site is located adjacent to Holland Tract camp no. 3. (Corps, map, 1936) No other information was located.

Evaluation: The remaining pilings were probably part of the camp no. 3 landing. The site has no significant historical associations and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HT-5

Location: On a berm in Old River at its junction with Rock Slough.

Description: Floating walkway and dock, apparently in good condition.

History: Former fish buyer Tony Busalacci remembers the berm as the location of a catfishing camp settled by John Rice in 1923. A 1936 map corroborates that recollection by calling the site "Rock Slough Landing and Fishing Camp." (Corps, map, 1936)

Evaluation: The site historically was used by commercial fishermen and retained the "fishing camp" label past the end of legal commercial fishing in the Delta. Generally floating walkways were and are simply built structures subject to rapid decay. It seems unlikely that a decently

maintained floating dock would date from a fishing camp of the 1920s and 1930s. The structure at HT-5 is almost certainly of recent origin and does not appear to have any historic significance sufficient to qualify it for the National Register of Historic Places.

MI-1

Location: Old River, on a berm adjacent to Mandeville Island and north of Quimby Island.

Description: Duck blind and dilapidated structure consisting of approximately four very light pilings and some cross-pieces.

History: No information was located on this site. The structure was probably designed for recreational fishing use and is undoubtedly of recent origin, as is the duck blind.

Evaluation: The berm structures have no historical significance and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MI-2

Location: Old River adjacent to Mandeville Island.

Description: Series of four dolphins in good condition adjacent to a large warehouse. A walkway constructed on pilings and a small pumping station are also at the site.

History: The site is between camps no. 21 and 23, both established in 1920. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936; San Joaquin County Assessor Records) Camp no. 21 had bunkhouses, cabins, and a two story house. (San Joaquin County Assessor's records)

Evaluation: The Mandeville Island camps and the warehouse structure and its adjacent dock and dolphins are perhaps typical of Delta labor camps and warehouse and dockage facilities. The structures at site MI-2 eligible for removal are not unusual and have no significant historical associations. The site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MI-3

Location: Old River adjacent to Mandeville Island.

Description: Several derelict pilings located along the shore adjacent to several buildings.

History: The site corresponds to Mandeville Island camp no. 23, established in 1920, and developed primarily in the 1920s. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936; San Joaquin County Assessor records)

Evaluation: The remaining pilings were almost certainly associated with camp no. 23; a camp that appears to be typical of Delta labor camps. In their deteriorated condition it is impossible to ascertain the original function of those pilings. The site has no significant historical associations and is badly deteriorated making it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

OT-1

Location: Indian Slough adjacent to Orwood Tract.

Description: Several hundred pilings in Indian Slough extending about half a mile along and through a berm between Orwood Tract and Byron Tract. The eastern end of the site nearly reaches an area known as St. Mary's Bay in Indian Slough.

History: The piles supported a tramway dating from about 1870 that carried hay from higher land to the west to St. Mary's Bay where it could be reloaded onto scow schooners for a trip to San Francisco that took up to seven days. Mules pulled the cars loaded with hay along the tracks. (Fallman interview) The tramway was probably in operation as long as St. Mary's Bay was the head of commercial navigation on Indian Slough. References to "Point of Timber Landing" upstream from St. Mary's Bay appear in the 1880s but its exact location has proven difficult to ascertain due to conflicting information. (Munro-Fraser, 498; Purcell, 736; Rideout, map, 1910) Regardless of the location of Point of Timber Landing it appears that it was upstream from the tramway site and therefore may, by the 1880s, have rendered the tramway unnecessary.

Evaluation: The tramway was a large and interesting feature dating from the 1870s. Although the remains are in poor condition, the age and uniqueness of the tramway make it potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the site should be left intact.

PT-1

Location: Old River, adjacent to central Palm Tract.

Description: Three pilings near shore extending only slightly above water.

History: The closest developed site to the pilings was camp no. 4 on Palm Tract. (Behrens, map, 1933; Rideout, map, 1910) The apparent distance from the camp location makes an identification of the remaining pilings as part of the camp landing questionable but no other information was found on this site.

Evaluation: The pilings may or may not have been part of the Camp no. 4 landing. This fact along with the general lack of documentation, the deteriorated condition of the site and the absence of significant historical associations makes the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

PT-2

Location: On a berm in Old River off the southeast corner of Palm Tract.

Description: Duckblind.

History: Duckblinds are lightly built, transient structures. Any now in existence can be considered of recent origin, probably within the last ten years.

maintained floating dock would date from a fishing camp of the 1920s and 1930s. The structure at HT-5 is almost certainly of recent origin and does not appear to have any historic significance sufficient to qualify it for the National Register of Historic Places.

MI-1

Location: Old River, on a berm adjacent to Mandeville Island and north of Quimby Island.

Description: Duck blind and dilapidated structure consisting of approximately four very light pilings and some cross-pieces.

History: No information was located on this site. The structure was probably designed for recreational fishing use and is undoubtedly of recent origin, as is the duck blind.

Evaluation: The berm structures have no historical significance and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MI-2

Location: Old River adjacent to Mandeville Island.

Description: Series of four dolphins in good condition adjacent to a large warehouse. A walkway constructed on pilings and a small pumping station are also at the site.

History: The site is between camps no. 21 and 23, both established in 1920. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936; San Joaquin County Assessor Records) Camp no. 21 had bunkhouses, cabins, and a two story house. (San Joaquin County Assessor's records)

Evaluation: The Mandeville Island camps and the warehouse structure and its adjacent dock and dolphins are perhaps typical of Delta labor camps and warehouse and dockage facilities. The structures at site MI-2 eligible for removal are not unusual and have no significant historical associations. The site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MI-3

Location: Old River adjacent to Mandeville Island.

Description: Several derelict pilings located along the shore adjacent to several buildings.

History: The site corresponds to Mandeville Island camp no. 23, established in 1920, and developed primarily in the 1920s. (Behrens, map, 1933; Corps, map, 1936; San Joaquin County Assessor records)

Evaluation: The remaining pilings were almost certainly associated with camp no. 23; a camp that appears to be typical of Delta labor camps. In their deteriorated condition it is impossible to ascertain the original function of those pilings. The site has no significant historical associations and is badly deteriorated making it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

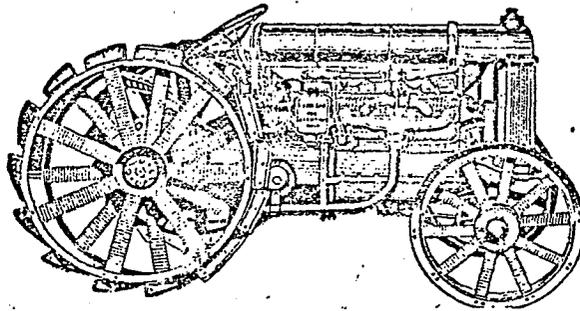
Evaluation: The duckblind at the site is of recent origin, has no historical significance and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

RHI-1

Location: Old River adjacent to the north side of Rhode Island.

Description: An old tractor on the bank at the water's edge and several pilings nearby.

History: The tractor appears to be a Fordson dating from the 1920s or early 1930s with steel tread wheels. The hood is missing but otherwise it appears to be intact. Fordson tractors, small or moderate in size by today's standards, were relatively common during the period from which this machine probably dates. The pilings are adjacent to the site of camp no. 1 and were probably associated with the camp landing. (Corps, map, 1936; Behrens, map, 1933) The island has not been farmed since 1938.



"Ford Autos - Fordson Tractor"

p. 113, Byron Times 8th Booster Ed. 1922-23

Evaluation: The Fordson tractor (if that is indeed proper identification) may have some value as an antique suitable for restoration. It should be salvaged by the State Lands Commission and made available to a museum, club or individual interested in its restoration. Since the tractor is located in Contra Costa County, historical or antique mechanics group in that county should be given the first opportunity to receive the relic.

The pilings are probably part of the old Camp no. 1 landing, dating to the 1920s or 1930s. The site is deteriorated and has no significant historical associations sufficient to qualify it for the National Register of Historic Places.

WI-1

Location: Old River adjacent to central Woodward Island.

Description: Tall, substantial dolphin on a berm and two pilings further to the channel.

History: The Corps of Engineers issued a permit for an overhead power line at the site to Standard Gas and Electric Company of San Francisco in 1906. In 1929-1930 steel overhead power poles were installed. (Corps, permit file) Leo Fallman confirms that these dolphins were part of the power line installation.

Evaluation: The dolphin once supported an electric transmission line. They have no significant historical associations and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

WT-1

Location: Old River at junction with main channel San Joaquin River, adjacent to Webb Tract.

Description: Small dolphins in very derelict condition and small associated pilings.

History: Tony Busalacci, a former fish buyer, recalled that fishing camps producing catfish and striped bass operated at the site. Herman Reed and a Mr. Eiler fished there even before 1907. (Busalacci interview) The Corps of Engineers identified fishing camps at the site in 1936, although commercial inland fishing had been illegal for several years. (Corps, map, 1936)

Evaluation: The dolphins and pilings were associated with a fishing camp that operated from at least the turn-of-the-century until the outlawing of commercial fishing 1933. The site is badly deteriorated and has no significant historical associations. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

V. OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

Several other locations, not designated to be affected by the harzard removal program, deserve at least passing mention.

Hickmott Cannery site. Lee Phillips convinced Robert Hickmott to move his asparagus canning operation to Orwood Tract in 1910 from Bouldin Island. Machinery was moved in on barges to the northeast corner of Orwood Tract where the cannery was erected largely on the levee. The steam plant was installed on pilings over the water, while two warehouses were constructed on the island side of the levee. The original foundation was of wood, but George Shima, who later took over the plant for use as a potato warehouse, laid new concrete foundations. By 1930 the plant had ceased operation. (Fallman interview; Behrens, map, 1933) The foundations, potato loading chutes and wharf structure remain today but the buildings themselves have disappeared.

Sunken dredge. An old dredger is almost totally submerged in the St. Mary's Bay section of Indian Slough adjacent to Orwood Tract. Only a few bolts can be seen above the waterline. The wreck is marked with signs by Contra Costa County as a navigation hazard but is not noted on other maps. Leo Fallman, island superintendent for California Delta Farms and long-time Orwood Tract resident, reports that it sank between 1900 and 1910 but he does not know its kname or any further details.

Dredger repair dock. At the northwest corner of Orwood Tract, west of the railroad stop known as Werner, California Delta Farms dredged a huge hole and drove 12 x 12 inch pilings into it. Dredgers in need of repair would float in and dam themselves into the prepared space. The water would then be pumped out leaving the dredger resting on the pilings so that work could be done on its hull. (Busalacci interview) Leo Fallman reported that the facility was used until about 1934 or 1935 and that he pulled out 120 to 130 pilings to open the area for use as a marina.

Barracks barge. A barge with a two story barracks structure built upon it is moored at Mandeville Island near site MI-2. The vessel is estimated by the San Joaquin County Assessor to date from about 1940. Although the barge has been unused recently and is therefore in something of a deteriorated condition, the basic structure of the unusual-looking ark appears sound.

VI. CONCLUSION

Objects identified as scheduled for removal by the State Lands Commission have been researched and evaluated in terms of their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places to determine whether or not they should in fact be removed.

Old River, Indian Slough, Holland Cut and the neighboring sloughs and cuts in the current report area contain a number of features that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and should

therefore be left undisturbed by the hazard removal program. The levee reinforcement pilings found by the berms offshore from Bacon Island (BNI-4, BNI-6) probably date from the 1870s when Chinese workers built the first levees along the historic Old River channel. The peat levees could break apart and pieces of the levee could simply float away if not held by the closely spaced pilings. Bacon Island, like Mandeville Island and Webb Tract, was abandoned following flooding in the late 1870s. Twentieth century reclaimers, largely California Delta Farms, used dredgers to build new levees that were often inland from the earlier levees. The pilings along the old levee line are a physical reminder of both early reclamation methods and the changes brought about by later reclamation practices.

The tramway in Indian Slough west of St. Mary's Bay (OT-1) dates from the 1870s and was a rather unique structure. It too may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and should be preserved.

The Hickmott Cannery site, the sunken dredge at St. Mary's Bay and the barracks barge at Mandeville Island might also be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places but since those features will not be affected by the hazard removal program they were not treated in detail in this report.

The Fordson tractor on Rhode Island (RH-1) should be made available for restoration and should be handled with that purpose in mind.

Should more detailed information regarding the location or limits of the features we have recommended for preservation be required we will, of course, provide whatever assistance we can.

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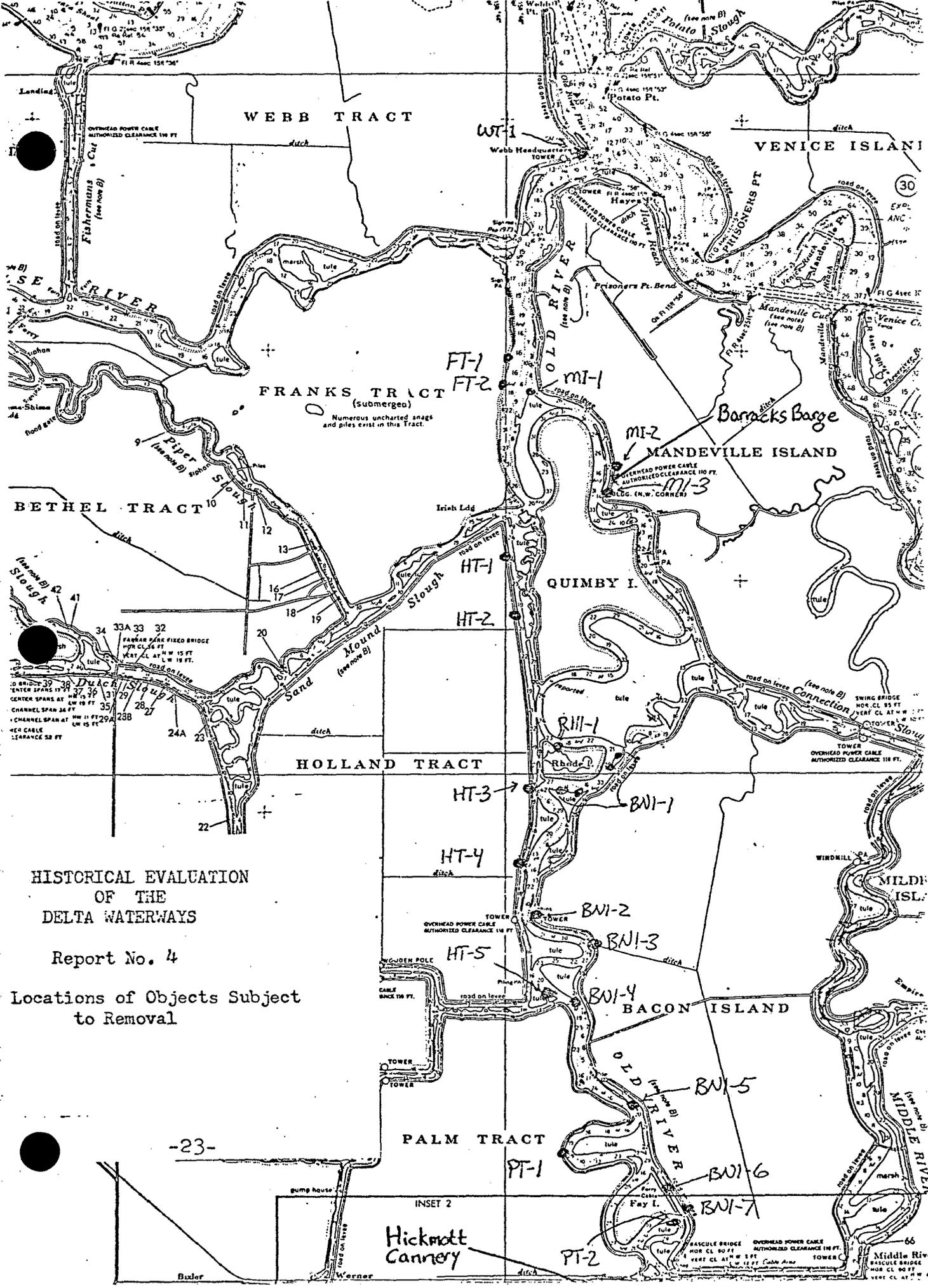
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HISTORICAL EVALUATION
OF THE
DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 4

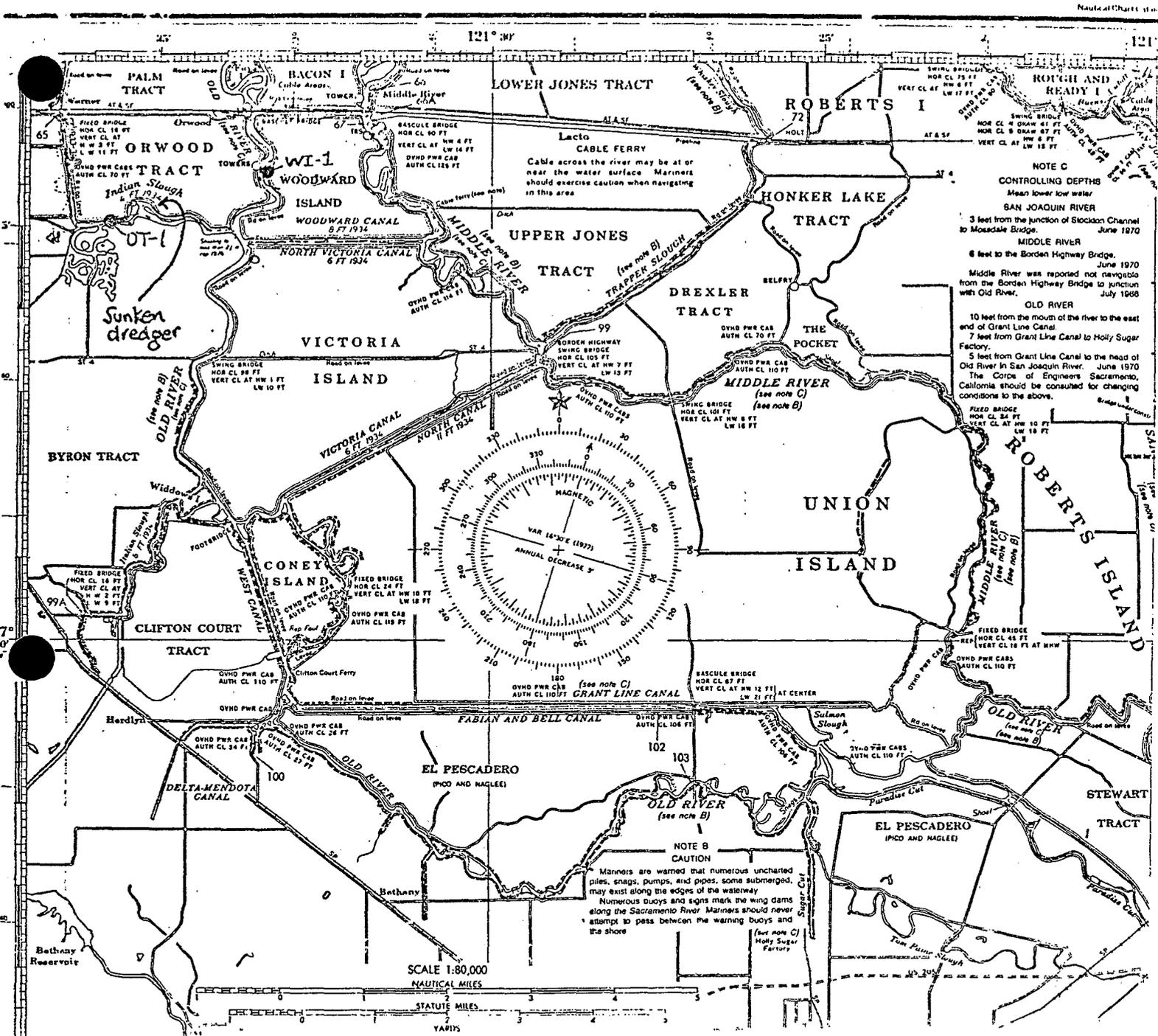
Locations of Objects Subject
to Removal

-23-

PALM TRACT

INSET 2

Hickmatt
Cannery



NOTE C
CONTROLLING DEPTHS
 Mean lower low water
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
 3 feet from the junction of Stockton Channel to Mossdale Bridge. June 1970
MIDDLE RIVER
 6 feet to the Borden Highway Bridge. June 1970
 Middle River was reported not navigable from the Borden Highway Bridge to junction with Old River. July 1968
OLD RIVER
 10 feet from the mouth of the river to the east end of Grant Line Canal. June 1970
 7 feet from Grant Line Canal to Holly Sugar Factory. The Corps of Engineers Sacramento, California should be consulted for changing conditions to the above.

**HISTORICAL EVALUATION
 OF THE
 DELTA WATERWAYS**

Report No. 4

Locations of Objects Subject
 to Removal

VII. REFERENCES

Interviews

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T. H. Williams Manuscript Collection, California Historical Society Library, San Francisco.

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October 10, 1978

Mr. William F. Northrop,
Executive Officer,
State Lands Commission,
1807 13th Street,
Sacramento, California 95814

ATTN: James E. Poe

Dear Sir,

I hereby transmit the fifth in our series of reports on the historic evaluation of objects in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta subject to removal in a program of channel clearance work undertaken by the State Lands Commission. The report covers the area around McDonald, Medford and Mildred islands, including portions of Middle River and the San Joaquin River, and all of Latham Slough, Columbia Cut and Turner Cut.

The area contains two sites that we have designated as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Pilings at BNI-10 and MII-2 are levee reinforcement pilings dating from the early 1870s when Chinese workers built the first levees on Bacon Island. The pilings are located on berms that are gradually eroding leaving the pilings increasingly in the water. This poses a management problem that your office and the State Office of Historic Preservation may need to consider, for the berm erosion process is continuous. As the berms erode the pilings themselves may be placed in jeopardy and they will become increasingly hazardous to navigation. Preservation of these sites may involve more than merely leaving the pilings in place. Should it become necessary now or at some future time to remove any of these pilings they should be made available to local museums or historical societies. The San Joaquin County Historical Society has already informed us that they would be interested in exhibiting some of the pilings that are now among the oldest surviving artifacts of early-day reclamation. Two photographs are enclosed of the MII-2 site on Mildred Island.

Work is now well underway on the remaining waterways in the area outlined for this historical survey. The progress of the work will enable us to combine our projected reports 6 and 7 into one report with a consequent saving in time. The report will cover the southern Delta, completing the site specific research and reports.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Paterson

Alan M. Paterson,
1111 J Street, No. 121,
Davis, California 95616

HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 5

Prepared for the State Lands Commission

Alan M. Paterson
Rand F. Herbert
Stephen R. Wee

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Lands Commission is in the process of removing navigation hazards from Delta waterways. In order to comply with federal regulations and to insure that items of historic importance are not removed or damaged, these studies have been commissioned.

II. LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF REPORT AREA

This report deals with the waterways surrounding Medford Island, McDonald Island, including McDonald Tract and Henning Tract, and Mildred Island, except Empire Cut. These islands lie entirely within San Joaquin County. The northern boundary of the report area is the main channel of the San Joaquin River with the western edge defined by the Middle River branch of the San Joaquin River. Latham Slough, to the east of Mildred Island, and Whiskey Slough, which once bisected McDonald Island, were natural watercourses. Turner Cut and Columbia Cut are man-made waterways. As elsewhere in the Delta, the successive stages of reclamation, together with navigation improvement on the San Joaquin River, have substantially altered the geography of the islands and waterways. Roberts Island was once considered to encompass all the land between Middle River and the main channel of the San Joaquin River, including McDonald Island, Mildred Island and Medford Island (see attached map for 1869 geography).

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF LANDS IN THE REPORT AREA

Land Ownership and Reclamation

In the report area, as in most of the Delta south of San Joaquin River, permanent reclamation followed the consolidation of small holdings by development companies financed by outside capital. On McDonald Island, originally a part of Roberts Island, small landholdings were established by 1862. These early owners were speculators in the swamp and overflow lands rather than actual farmers, and among the owners of McDonald Island was the well-known financier noted for his investments in San Francisco and the Comstock, William C. Ralston (Index Map of San Joaquin County, 1862). As early as 1869, it was becoming obvious that capital, engineering expertise and unified control of whole tracts might be necessary to reclaim the Delta. The Tide Land Reclamation Company was the

first company to amass large acreages and attempt to reclaim them. Among that concern's holdings was a portion of south-eastern McDonald Island east of Whiskey Slough and extensive lands on Roberts Island (Tide Land Reclamation Co., map, 1869).

By the mid-1870's the Tide Land Reclamation Company's holdings were purchased by Joel P. Whitney. The rest of McDonald Tract (the portion of McDonald Island east of Whiskey Slough) was owned by J. H. Bostwick and H. Hampton, while the Henning Tract section of the island was controlled by Henning and Speed (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1876). By 1879 Henning Tract had been sold to Vincent Neal, the northern portion of McDonald Tract once owned by Hampton had changed hands and, most significantly, Whitney's acreage had passed to the Glasgow-California Land Company, which in the next year owned the Henning Tract as well (San Joaquin County Assessor's Maps, 1879, 1880). The Glasgow-California Company will be covered in greater detail below. The company began disposing of some of its domain in the late 1880's, with its acreage on Henning Tract being returned to S. Henning (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1889). In 1897, John W. Ferris, an engineer for the Glasgow-California Land Company, bought out the company's holdings in the report area and the next year broke them up with some of the land going to John Herd, who had also been associated with the Scottish Company (San Joaquin County Assessor's Maps, 1897, 1898).

In 1907, the rough outlines of McDonald Island were established with the dredging of Turner Cut as far as Whiskey Slough and Empire Cut below Henning Tract. In 1912, Lee Phillips, the Los Angeles based founder of California Delta Farms, Inc., bought out Henning's acreage and by the next year California Delta Farms owned all of present-day McDonald Island (San Joaquin County Assessor's Maps, 1912, 1913). Reclamation of McDonald Island by California Delta Farms was finally completed in 1913 (USBR, Report DL-8, 6).

Unlike McDonald Island, Medford Island was in a single ownership at least as early as the mid-1870's. The Bradford family owned the area that eventually became the island until 1905 when Pierce and Company took over (San Joaquin County Assessor's Maps, 1876, 1893, 1900, 1905). California Delta Farms later acquired the property and reclaimed it in 1916 (USBR, Report DL-8, 9)

Mildred Island had a variety of owners in the nineteenth century, the most notable being John C. Caperton on the southern portion (San Joaquin County Assessor's Maps, 1876, 1879). Caperton was an associate of John Coffee Hays of Mandeville Island and a speculator in Bay Area real estate as well as in the Delta. By 1906, the island was divided between the Mildred

Island and Commercial Company on the north and the Middle River Navigation and Canal Company on the south (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1906). The latter concern was organized in 1902 with insuranceman, George Cochran of Los Angeles, owning 7,495 of its 7,500 shares of stock. F. H. Rindge was the organization's president and Lee Phillips was its secretary (Middle River Navigation and Canal Company, Articles of Incorporation). The presence of Rindge, the owner of Rindge Tract and other Delta Islands, and Phillips, a Rindge associate and later founder of California Delta Farms, illustrates how closely the Middle River Navigation and Canal Company was tied to the Los Angeles interests that were responsible for much of the reclamation of the southern Delta. (See Report No. 4 for further information on Phillips, Rindge and their associates).

The Middle River Navigation and Canal Company apparently had a brief existence with its holdings on the Upper and Lower Jones tracts going to the Rindge Land and Navigation Company in 1907, while the U. S. Briquette Company of San Francisco took over southern Mildred Island (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1907). Land continued to change hands on the island but, unlike McDonald Island or Medford Island, neither California Delta Farms nor any other large reclamation concern was apparently involved. That fact may explain the delayed reclamation of Mildred Island. In 1913, the levee system was only partially completed and in 1917 levee breaks kept the island out of agricultural production. Reclamation District No. 2021, formed in 1917, rebuilt the levees from 1918 to 1920, making Mildred Island one of the last Delta islands to be reclaimed (USBR, Report DL-8, 5).

McDonald Island, Medford Island and Mildred Island were all reclaimed in the early twentieth century, the first two by California Delta Farms. Roberts Island, in the area south of Turner Cut, had a somewhat different reclamation history. Although no reclamation districts were formed on the big island until 1870, reclamation activities got underway in 1856 (USBR, Report DL-9, 6). In 1869, the Tide Land Reclamation Company acquired much of the island, which General B. S. Alexander of the Army Engineers estimated could be reclaimed at a cost of from \$1.84 to \$3.00 per acre, depending on whether or not machinery was used (Fresh Water Tide Lands of California, 27). Work began on Roberts Island in May 1870, under the direction of Captain William C. Walker, but was not completed (Jackson, 212). J. P. Whitney succeeded the Tide Land Reclamation Company as owner of much of Roberts Island and he too initiated reclamation activities, apparently beginning in the southern section of the island where mineral soils were more hospitable to levee construction. With work on the Middle Division completed in late 1876, Whitney sold out to Morton Coates Fisher. Fisher in turn formed a new concern, the Glasgow-California Land Company, to pump Scottish capital into swamp land reclamation (Thompson, 487-488).

The Glasgow-California Land Company was formed in April, 1877 by Fisher, whose address was listed as London, and various industrialists and merchants of Glasgow. The company bought its land, 30,000 acres, from Fisher and contracted with him for the construction of levees, dams, sluiceways and other reclamation works. By the end of 1877, Fisher had done 40,000 pounds sterling worth of reclamation work on Roberts Island and in 1878, the work was considered essentially complete (Glasgow-California papers). Fisher had dammed ten sloughs, built 32 miles of levee and strengthened existing works, largely in the so-called Lower Division at the northern end of Roberts Island (USBR, Report DL-9,7). The cost of reclaiming about 36,000 acres in the Lower Division was approximately \$10.00 per acre, with one dam at a slough costing \$25,000. Where possible, the work was accomplished with horse-drawn scrapers (Thompson and West, 43), but thousands of Chinese were found necessary to complete the levees (Jackson, 213, Stockton Independent, September 21, 1877.)

Among the hazards of reclamation work was the flammable nature of the peat soil used in levee construction. The Stockton Herald of October 26, 1878, reported that a portion of a levee on Middle River was on fire and that a fire engine mounted on a barge was enroute to the scene. Although the early reports were full of drama and the hint of disaster, the fire was put out promptly and was determined to have done less than \$100 damage to 450 feet of the levee (Stockton Herald, October 26, 29, 1878).

Following the reclamation of Roberts Island, the Glasgow-California Land Company engaged in farming operations. A careful accounting of operations on northeast Roberts Island near Wakefield (just west of Stockton) showed that the production of wheat and barley on a small portion of the company's domain in 1882, resulted in a net profit of over \$11.50 per acre. The actual farming was done by renters (Stockton Independent, December 2, 1882).

A break in a cross levee between the Middle and Upper divisions in 1884 cost the Glasgow-California Land Company dearly and by 1886, it had become apparent to the Scottish investors that the development of Delta lands could be far from lucrative. In 1886, the shareholders agreed to begin winding up an enterprise that had lost at least \$1,000,000 (Jackson, 216). The company began an eight-year liquidation of its assets in 1890. Land in the vicinity of Turner Cut went to John Ferris, a company engineer, from about 1897 to 1899, and was then subdivided (Glasgow-California papers; San Joaquin County Assessor's Maps, 1897, 1899). During the liquidation period, additional work was done on the Middle

and Lower division levees by the Woods Brothers using a clamshell dredge, the Roberts Island, designed for the job by Ferris (Stockton Independent, May 31, 1893).

Reclamation development on Mandeville Island and Bacon Island was discussed in Report No. 4 and in the interests of brevity will not be repeated here.

Agriculture

(Source, except as noted: Bureau of Reclamation, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigations, Report Areas DL-8, DL-9)

Statistical information on Delta crops is unavailable prior to 1924, but it may be reasonably inferred that grain, especially wheat and barley, was the staple crop of the Nineteenth Century on those tracts that had been successfully reclaimed. Acreage reclaimed by California Delta Farms was often farmed in association with potato grower George Shima, suggesting that in the first years after reclamation on McDonald and Medford Islands, potatoes were an important crop, perhaps along with grains, onions and other lesser crops.

On McDonald Island potatoes were the most important single crop in the 1920's and they remained significant into the mid-1950's. In the mid-1920's, Zuckerman Brothers introduced a new method of handling potatoes using mechanical washing and grading on their Henning Tract acreage (Stockton Record, July 1, 1926). Sugar beets were grown on McDonald Island in the late 1920's and early 1930's. As on most southern Delta islands, asparagus gained importance after World War II. Onions, celery, beans, grain and corn and pasture have also been grown on McDonald Island.

Mildred Island, including some 1,000 to 1,200 acres, grew mostly potatoes and onions through the late 1930's, but the early 1950's saw a substantial turn to asparagus cultivation. Grain, corn and milo have also been grown on the island.

Medford Island is about the same size as Mildred Island and has had a similar crop pattern. Potatoes dominated the early 1920's and were combined with beans and corn in the late 1920's and early 1930's. After World War II, Medford Island was turned into an asparagus farm with no other crops being reported as late as 1955.

The Lower Division of Roberts Island covers over 10,000 acres and has seen a large variety of crops. Potatoes were important in the late 1920's through the 1930's, but the most consistent staple crops have been grain, hay, corn and milo. Alfalfa was grown in substantial acreages until the late 1930's. Beginning in the 1940's, asparagus acreage increased so that by the mid-1950's, up to one-half of the division was planted to that crop.

Transportation

The islands in the report area were not on major scheduled steamboat routes except for the San Joaquin River frontage of Medford, McDonald and Roberts Islands. The first two islands were not successfully reclaimed until the Twentieth Century and, therefore, had little need for steamer service when that form of transportation was in its heyday. Roberts Island, however, had a number of landings (Rideout, map, 1910). Produce was handled primarily on barges moved by tugs, while motorized launches carried passengers and light freight. There is nothing to suggest that waterborne commerce in the report area was in any way unique from that of the rest of the southern Delta (Christensen interview).

In terms of isolation from highway transportation, the area is noteworthy. A cable ferry, established in 1928, linked McDonald Island to Roberts Island, but Medford and Mildred Islands were without links to the mainland as late as the 1940's (Modesto Bee, March 19, 1978; Thomas Bros., map, 1942). The McDonald Island ferry was established and operated by San Joaquin County, but ferries that were finally established to join Mildred Island to Lower Jones Tract and Medford Island to Empire Tract were and are privately owned. The Medford Island ferry utilizes a surplus military landing craft. In 1955, Zuckerman interests, owners of most of McDonald Island, were granted permission to establish a private ferry across Empire Cut between Henning Tract and Lower Jones Tract (Stockton Record, February 11, 1955). In March, 1978, an offer by the McDonald Island Reclamation District to pay half the cost of a bridge over Turner Cut was accepted by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, signaling an eventual end to the McDonald Island ferry (Modesto Bee, March 19, 22, 1978).

IV. SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

Objects identified by State Lands Commission as subject to removal have been researched as fully as possible and evaluated as to their historic values and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The sites are numbered according to their location adjoining Bacon Island (BNI), Henning Tract (HET), Mandeville Island (MI), McDonald Tract (MCDT), Medford Island (MEI), Mildred Island (MII), or Roberts Island (RI). Locations are numbered in a clockwise manner. State Lands Commission worked with U. S. Geological Survey topographical maps, but for ease of reproduction the attached map of site locations is based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration navigation chart "Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers." revised April, 1977.

BNI-8

Location:

Middle River, adjacent to east central Bacon Island.

Description:

Two light pilings connected by cross pieces with one plank extending from them and resting on some submerged support. Two sticks protrude from the water where the plank is resting.

History:

The structure, apparently a derelict small dock of unknown vintage, is at the site of Camp No. 9. (USC&GS, map, 1931). Camp No. 9 was established with a house, barn and sheds about 1920 with bunkhouse added in the 1940's. Packing sheds were established at the site in 1954 and 1966 (San Joaquin County Assessor's records).

Evaluation:

The remains of the small landing are in very poor condition. Its age is uncertain and Camp No. 9, where the derelict structure is located, has no significant historical associations. The remains of the small dock are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BNI-9

Location:

Middle River adjacent to east central Bacon Island.

Description:

Four small pilings arranged in pairs, each pair linked by a light crosspiece.

History:

According to a Corps of Engineers' map of 1913, a berm extended past the site, blocking access to the main channel (Corps, map, 1913). Camp No. 9 was to the south of the site (USC&GS, map, 1931). The structure was probably a small landing.

Evaluation:

The presumed landing is badly deteriorated. No documentary evidence exists to identify the site in a satisfactory manner. It is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BNI-10

Location:

Berm in Middle River adjacent to east central Bacon Island.

Description:

Small piles in closely spaced rows extending from the tip of the berm.

History:

The pilings may have been associated with levee reinforcement activities in the Nineteenth Century (See Report No. 4 for examples on the western side of Bacon Island). The berm may once have been part of Bacon Island and the site of levee construction in the early 1870's. The levees were made of peat using Chinese labor and proved unstable because the peat was so light that it could float away in large sections. Pilings were used in an attempt to anchor the peat levees. The early levees failed and the island was abandoned in 1874. (USBR, DL-8, 5-6). When Bacon Island was finally reclaimed in 1914 the dredges straightened the island's outline to shorten the length of the necessary levees, thus creating berms such as the one at BNI-10. An Army Engineer map of 1913 shows the berm as considerably larger than it is today (Corps, map, 1913).

Evaluation:

The piles were almost certainly driven to strengthen the original Bacon Island levees in the early 1870's. Field notes made in 1879 by an observer named Tucker indicate that some 10,000 pilings were driven in an attempt to hold the Bacon Island levee. The site offers an illustration of early reclamation methods and problems as well as the manner in which subsequent reclamation activities altered the island's boundary. The site may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and should not be disturbed by hazard removal operations.

HET-1

Location:

Latham Slough adjacent to Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description:

Remains of a double row of substantial pilings with additional pilings on landward side.

History:

The Corps of Engineers permitted a beet dump at the site for Holly Sugar in 1940. The dump included dolphins and was southwest of Camp No. 23a (Corps, permit file).

Evaluation:

The pilings are the remains of a sugar beet dump established in 1940. The site is deteriorated and is without significant historical associations. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HET-2

Location:

Latham Slough, adjacent to Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description:

Two almost submerged piles.

History:

The site is adjacent to Camp No. 23a. Houses were built there about 1920 and a warehouse was added about 1930. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records).

Evaluation:

The two piles were probably associated with Camp No. 23a, but their purpose is unknown. The site is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HET-3

Location:

Middle River adjacent to northwest Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description: Duck blind.

History:

Duck blinds in the Delta are lightly built structures not expected to survive for long. Leo Fallman, long-time Delta resident, estimates that existing blinds are probably less than ten years old.

Evaluation:

The site is of recent origin and without historical significance.

HET-4

Location:

Middle River adjacent to northwest Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description:

Single row of ten pilings.

History:

Landing 24-1/2 may have been at the site (USC&GS, map, 1931), but Tony Busalacci, former mail boat operator, did not remember a landing at that location (Busalacci interview). No other evidence was located.

Evaluation:

The piles may have been a landing but that conclusion seems open to doubt. At other points in the Delta a row of piles has been identified as levee reinforcement and the piles at HET-4 may have served that purpose. In any event, the site lacks significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HET-5

Location:

Middle River near the junction with Columbia Cut, adjacent to northwestern Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description: Duck blinds.

History:

Duck blinds in the Delta are lightly built structures not expected to survive for long. Leo Fallman, longtime Delta resident, estimates that existing blinds are probably less than ten years old.

Evaluation:

The site is of recent origin and without historical significance.

MI-4

Location:

Middle River adjacent to southeast Mandeville Island.

Description:

A reasonably intact light walkway, crudely constructed of six pairs of light pilings carrying a narrow plank floor. Light boards have been nailed near the tops of the pilings as handrails.

History:

The walkway is at the site of Camp No. 1 (USC&GS, map, 1931). All structures shown on the Assessor's Records date from 1956 or later (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records).

Evaluation:

The walkway, of uncertain vintage, was associated with Camp No. 1. It lacks significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-1

Location:

Berm in Columbia Cut, adjacent to northwestern McDonald Tract.

Description: Single piling on berm.

History:

Power lines have crossed Columbia Cut at that point since 1931. The Corps of Engineers issued a permit to Pacific Gas and Electric in 1931 and another in 1955 (Corps, permit file). The piling probably helped support the earlier line. Tony Busalacci confirmed that this was a power line site (Busalacci interview).

Evaluation:

The piling was associated with an overhead power line dating from 1931. It is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-2

Location:

Columbia Cut adjacent to northwestern McDonald Tract.

Description:

Single piles located to each side of the "Who's Goose Duck Club".

History:

Camp No. 8 was located near the site (USC&GS, map, 1931). Tony Busalacci said a landing was located at the present duck club site. He noted that sheet piles were used in the vicinity as a breakwater (Busalacci interview). Assessor's records show no improvements earlier than 1945.

Evaluation:

The pilings at the site were probably associated with either the Camp No. 8 landing or with a breakwater. In any event, the site has been substantially altered by construction of the duck club and has no significant historical associations. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-3

Location:

Headreach Cutoff (San Joaquin River) adjacent to northern McDonald Tract.

Description:

Four dolphins and evidence of at least two more broken off near the waterline. A warehouse is adjacent.

History:

Camp No. 6 was at the location (USC&GS, map, 1931). In 1922, the camp had five buildings (Corps, map, 1922). The warehouse dates from about 1935 and bunkhouses were built earlier (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records). Tony Busalacci believes the dolphins were in place by 1916. He remembers the location as a major camp with sorting machinery that was served by large boats and barges big enough to haul 15 freight carloads apiece (Busalacci interview).

Evaluation:

The dolphins were used to moor boats and barges at Camp No. 6, a major shipping point for agricultural produce. They may date from about 1916; they were almost certainly there by the 1920's. The area is not without historic interest, but aside from the warehouse, the dolphins are the principal reminders of activities of by-gone days. These dolphins are similar to well-maintained moorings found elsewhere. The fact that the site represents nothing unique and lacks outstanding historical significance, makes it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-4

Location:

Twenty-one Mile Cut (San Joaquin River) adjacent to eastern McDonald Tract.

Description:

Derelict remains of about six dolphins with row of smaller pilings interspersed.

History:

Camp No. 2 was at the location and Camp. No. 3 was nearby to the northwest. In 1931 there were six structures at the site including a large building on the levee (USC&GS, map, 1931). Tony Busalacci noted that Camps 2 and 3 were operated together and that it was a major sorting area for produce where barges were loaded (Busalacci interview). Structures in the area date from 1935 to 1950 (San Joaquin Assessor's Records). San Joaquin County Deputy Sheriffs who assisted in the on-site inspection reported that the carrot packing shed at the site burned about three years ago.

Evaluation:

The dolphins and other pilings were at the site of a major sorting and shipping center. The deteriorated condition of the site and its lack of significant historical associations, makes it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-5

Location:

Turner Cut adjacent to southeastern McDonald Island.

Description:

A considerable number of pilings, including some dolphins and sheet pilings used as breakwaters. All are broken off near the waterline and many are overgrown with weeds.

History:

Camp No. 11 was in the vicinity with two structures in 1931 (USC&GS, map, 1931). Tony Busalacci did not recall anything at that point; his first mail stop was further down Turner Cut at Camp No. 12 (Busalacci interview).

Evaluation:

Camps No. 11 and 12 were relatively close together, so it is at least possible that the pilings could have been associated with either camp. The absence of complete documentary evidence and the lack of any significant historical associations at the site make it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-6

Location:

Turner Cut adjacent to southeastern McDonald Island.

Description:

Two intact dolphins, three dolphins broken off near the waterline and several nearby pilings.

History:

A nearby warehouse dates from 1920 (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records). Tony Busalacci remembers this as another major sorting and shipping area regularly visited by barges (Busalacci interview). However, the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey chart for 1931 provide no information on the area.

Evaluation:

It seems probable that the location was a sorting and loading station and that the dolphins were used to secure barges while they were being loaded. The Assessor's dating of the warehouse is an estimate and is subject to error. The failure of the usually reliable 1931 chart to show the location as developed would indicate that the area was not used until sometime after 1931. The site has no outstanding historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MCDT-7

Location:

On a berm in Turner Cut, adjacent to southeastern McDonald Island.

Description:

Two piles with a crossbar.

History:

The U. S. Geological Survey Map for 1911 shows no berms in the area (USGS, map, 1911). The east side of the present berm was historic Whiskey Slough, while the west side, where MCDT-7 is located, is Turner Cut. The inference may be drawn that Turner Cut had not been dredged yet at that point in 1911. Any structure in the water at that location must, therefore, be later than 1911. Tony Busalacci recalled a catfishing camp there run by Al Davis and Milo Perovitch and he thinks a fisherman named Wilson once lived there (Busalacci interview). A small structure is on the berm and the County Assessor considers it a small recreational site (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records).

Evaluation:

The pilings were probably associated with a fishing camp at that location established sometime after 1911 and before the end of commercial fishing in 1933. The site is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-1

Location:

San Joaquin River (Stockton Deep Water Channel) adjacent to the northern tip of Medford Island.

Description:

Cluster of five pilings barely extending above the waterline.

History:

The site is at the location of channel marker light No. 6 of the deepwater channel which was cut in the late 1920's and early 1930's (USC&GS, map, 1931; Corps, map, 1934). A modern light is adjacent to the site.

Evaluation:

The site is probably the remains of an earlier channel marker light support structure. It lacks significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-2

Location:

San Joaquin River adjacent to northeastern Medford Island.

Description:

A small landing solidly constructed of six round wooden piles with crosspieces and decking and a site nearby consisting of a pair of pilings near the shore and another pair 8-10 feet out, probably the remains of a small landing.

History:

The structures were at Medford Island headquarters, or Camp No. 2 (Busalacci interview; USC&GS, map, 1931). Buildings at the location were present at least as early as 1922 (Corps, map, 1922). Assessor's records show houses, a watertower and duck club dating from 1925 with a shed and fishing dock on pilings added in 1950 (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records).

Evaluation:

The age of the derelict docks is uncertain, though one could be the fishing dock added in 1950. The structures have no significant historical associations and should not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-3

Location:

San Joaquin River adjacent to eastern Medford Island.

Description:

A single piling extending several feet above the water.

History:

The location was known as Camp No. 1. It had nine structures in 1922, two of them on the levee, while four buildings appeared in 1931 with one set on the levee (Corps, map, 1922; USC&GS, map, 1931).

Evaluation:

The piling may have been associated with Camp No. 1, but its purpose is unknown. It has no apparent significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-4

Location:

Columbia Cut adjacent to south side of Medford Island.

Description:

Two pair of piles linked by crossbeams, one pair in front of the other, and two other pilings nearby.

History:

A Holly Sugar Company beet dump was located there in July, 1938 (Corps, permit file).

Evaluation:

The piles at MEI-4 are the remains of a beet dump dating to 1938. They have no significant historical associations and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-5

Location:

Tule berm in Middle River at junction with Columbia Cut, adjacent to southern Medford Island.

Description: Three square pilings.

History:

No record was located. The only evidence pertaining to the area was a float and gangplank built in 1966 listed by the Assessor (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records).

Evaluation:

The piles at MEI-5 have proven unidentifiable. The absence of any documentary evidence or apparent historic significance makes them ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-6

Location:

Middle River adjacent to southern Medford Island.

Description:

Three small piles in a row next to the bank.

History:

No record of the site has been located. At other points in the Delta undocumented rows of pilings have been identified as levee reinforcement.

Evaluation:

The pilings may have been driven to reinforce the Medford Island levee. They have no significant historical associations and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-7

Location:

Middle River adjacent to western Medford Island.

Description:

The derelict remains of a small landing and numerous other derelict pilings nearby, most close to the bank.

History:

The location was once a fish camp (USC&GS, map, 1931). Tony Busalacci recalled a fisherman named Fred McClure in that area (Busalacci interview). A barn-like structure sits directly behind the derelict landing. Assessor records show a bunkhouse dating from 1940 in the area, but the building nearby does not appear to fit that description (San Joaquin Assessor's records).

Evaluation:

The pilings may have been associated with a long-abandoned fishing camp. The decaying landing might have served either the fishing camp or activities carried on in connection with structures near the site. In any event the site has no significant historical association and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MEI-8

Location:

Middle River adjacent to western Medford Island.

Description:

Single row of approximately eight pilings.

History:

No documentary evidence was located. Tony Busalacci recalled a levee break at the site in 1936. Pilings were driven to help repair the break (Busalacci interview).

Evaluation:

The pilings probably date from 1936 when they were used to repair the levee. The site is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MII-1

Location:

Latham Slough adjacent to east central Mildred Island.

Description:

Single row of four pilings.

History:

In late 1942 and early 1943, a temporary cable ferry was installed by San Joaquin County at that point (Corps, permit file).

Evaluation:

The pilings were probably used in connection with the temporary ferry. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MII-2

Location:

By a berm in Middle River at junction with Empire Cut adjacent to southwestern Mildred Island.

Description:

Rows of light pilings, perhaps 4 x 4 inches, on three sides of the berm.

History:

Tony Busalacci remembered a "Chinese Salting Station" in the vicinity where fish were salted and loaded on junks for a trip to the Orient. He recalled the use of trees as mooring rather than any formal dock (Busalacci interview). The U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey showed a salting station in 1931 on the berm east of the berm in question (USC&GS, map, 1931).

Evaluation:

The configuration of the pilings and the 1931 map indicate that the berm did not support a salting station. The berm, however, is the property of the Bacon Island Reclamation District, suggesting that it was once part of that island. If so, this site could be another example of the light pilings driven in an attempt to prevent the 1872-era peat levees from floating away. The berm was severed from the island in the Twentieth Century when the island was successfully reclaimed by the construction of new levees that cut off the rather peninsular sections of the island in favor of straighter, more efficient levees. As in the case of BNI-10 in this report and BNI-4 and BNI-5 in Report No. 4, this site illustrates early reclamation methods and how Delta geography was altered by subsequent reclamation activities. These pilings probably dating from the early 1870's are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and should not be disturbed.

RI-1

Location:

Turner Cut adjacent to northwest Roberts Island.

Description:

About a dozen pilings in an apparently random cluster near the bank.

History:

The location was marked as "Christensen Landing" as early as 1911 (USGS, map, 1911) and is still marked on modern navigation charts. In 1931, five structures were located there (USC&GS, map, 1931).

Evaluation:

The pilings were probably associated with Christensen Landing, a river landing dating from the early days of Turner Cut, which was dredged about 1907. The site is badly deteriorated and has no outstanding historical associations. It should not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

RI-2

Location:

Turner Cut adjacent to northwestern Roberts Island.

Description:

Piles with crossbar and other piles closer to bank; one

intact dolphin and one dolphin broken off at the waterline. The dolphins flank the other piles.

History:

The Corps of Engineers granted a permit to Holly Sugar to build a beet dump at the site on August 10, 1947. Plans show that the "piles with crossbars" were meant to support the conveyor, while barges were tied to the two 5-pole dolphins authorized by the Corps. (Corps, permit file).

Evaluation:

The pilings and dolphins are the remains of a beet dump dating from 1947. The site has deteriorated to the point that it can be fully understood only with references to the printed plans. This fact in addition to the relative vintage and lack of outstanding historical associations make the site ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

V. CONCLUSION

Objects identified as scheduled for removal by the State Lands Commission have been researched and evaluated in terms of their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places to determine whether or not they should, in fact, be removed.

The waterways in the report area have a number of interesting sites, most notably the rows of light pilings found on berms at BNI-10 and MII-2. These berms were once part of Bacon Island and the pilings were driven, probably between 1872 and 1874, to keep the peat levees from floating away. Reclamation by California Delta Farms straightened the levee line, creating the berms. These sites should be considered potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places since they are among the earliest existing artifacts of Delta reclamation and illustrate something of early reclamation methods and how the island geography was later altered. We would like to point out that these pilings do pose a management problem. Old maps indicate that the berms were once larger than they are today. As the berms erode, the pilings remain, posing an increasing hazard to navigation. In addition the pilings may have more interpretive value when associated with the berms. We cannot provide an easy solution to this problem, but we would emphasize that berm erosion is a constant process and more than merely refraining from pulling out the pilings may be needed to preserve the sites. If any of these pilings are removed as navigation hazards, they should be made available to local museums; the San Joaquin County Historical Society has already expressed an interest in exhibiting such artifacts.

McDonald Island features an unusually large number of dolphins and structural pilings associated with major camp landings or beet dumps and Roberts Island has the remains of a beet dump. The remaining pilings, however, are by no means unique as dolphins can be found along most waterfronts. The beet dump locations are too deteriorated to warrant preservation as historic sites, especially since one beet dump in the Delta does appear to have survived intact. It is located on Haas Slough in Solano County and retains its machinery as well as pilings and dolphins.

A point of interest not subject to removal on northern McDonald Island is a decaying but substantially intact potato boat, the Mandeville. It was built about 1917 or 1918 and was apparently christened the J. W. Higgins after her owner, a Stockton produce buyer. She was originally equipped with a gasoline engine and later was re-equipped with two 65-horsepower Atlas diesels. An interesting feature of the boat's construction is an elevator near the bow which was used to match landing heights to facilitate the movement of cargo. The J. W. Higgins was sold to the Zuckerman family, farmers on several Delta islands including McDonald and Mandeville, and was renamed the Brothers, possibly after the Zuckerman brothers. She was apparently the last of the Zuckerman fleet and may have been moved to her resting place along Headreach Cutoff just west of the Stockton Deepwater Channel sometime in the late 1950's. The inlet where she was moored has since closed so that the vessel is virtually aground. The Pioneer Museum in Stockton has some of the boat's wooden parts on display and has two photographs of her in service.

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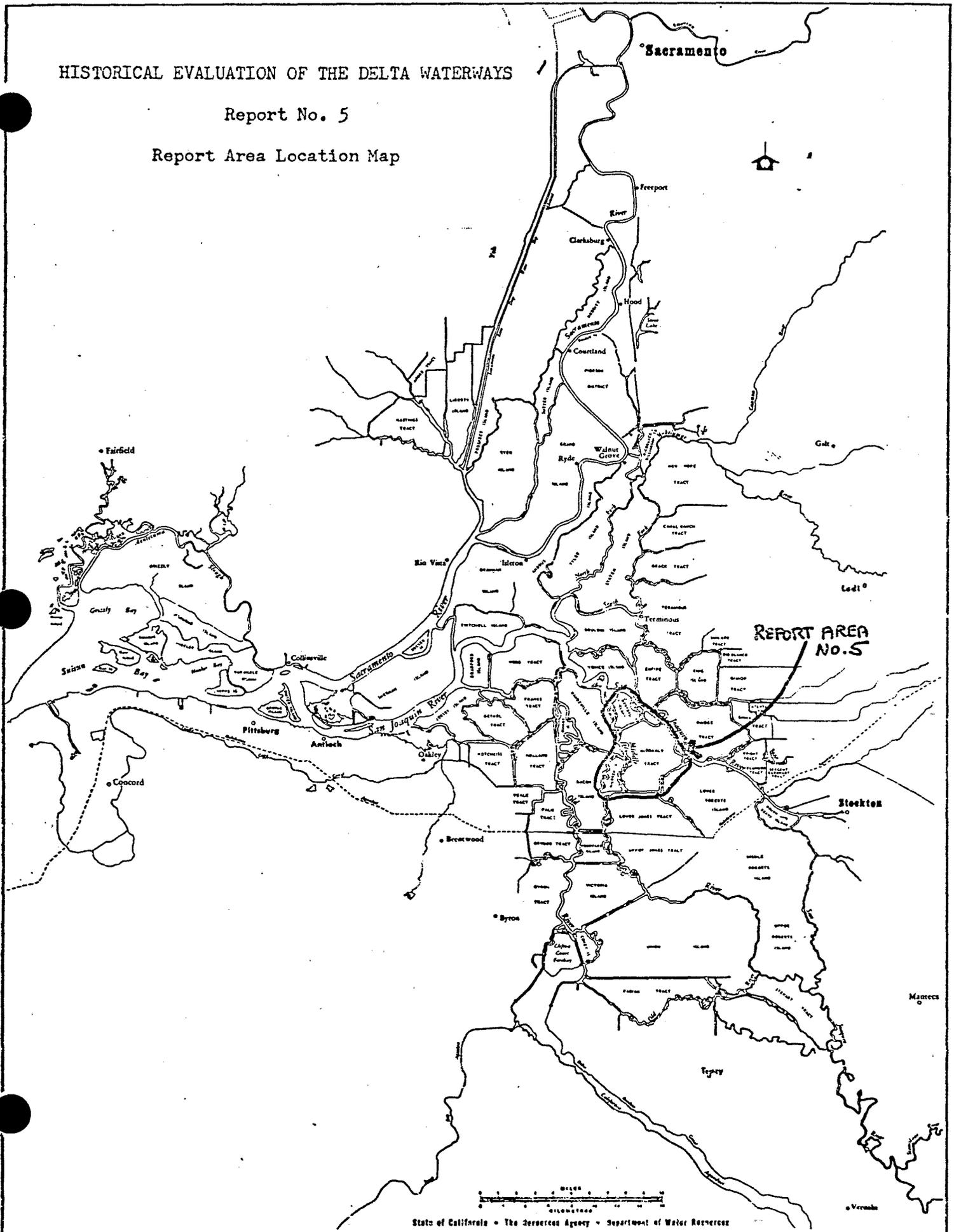
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HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 5

Report Area Location Map



State of California • The Georegular Agency • Department of Water Resources

C-076016

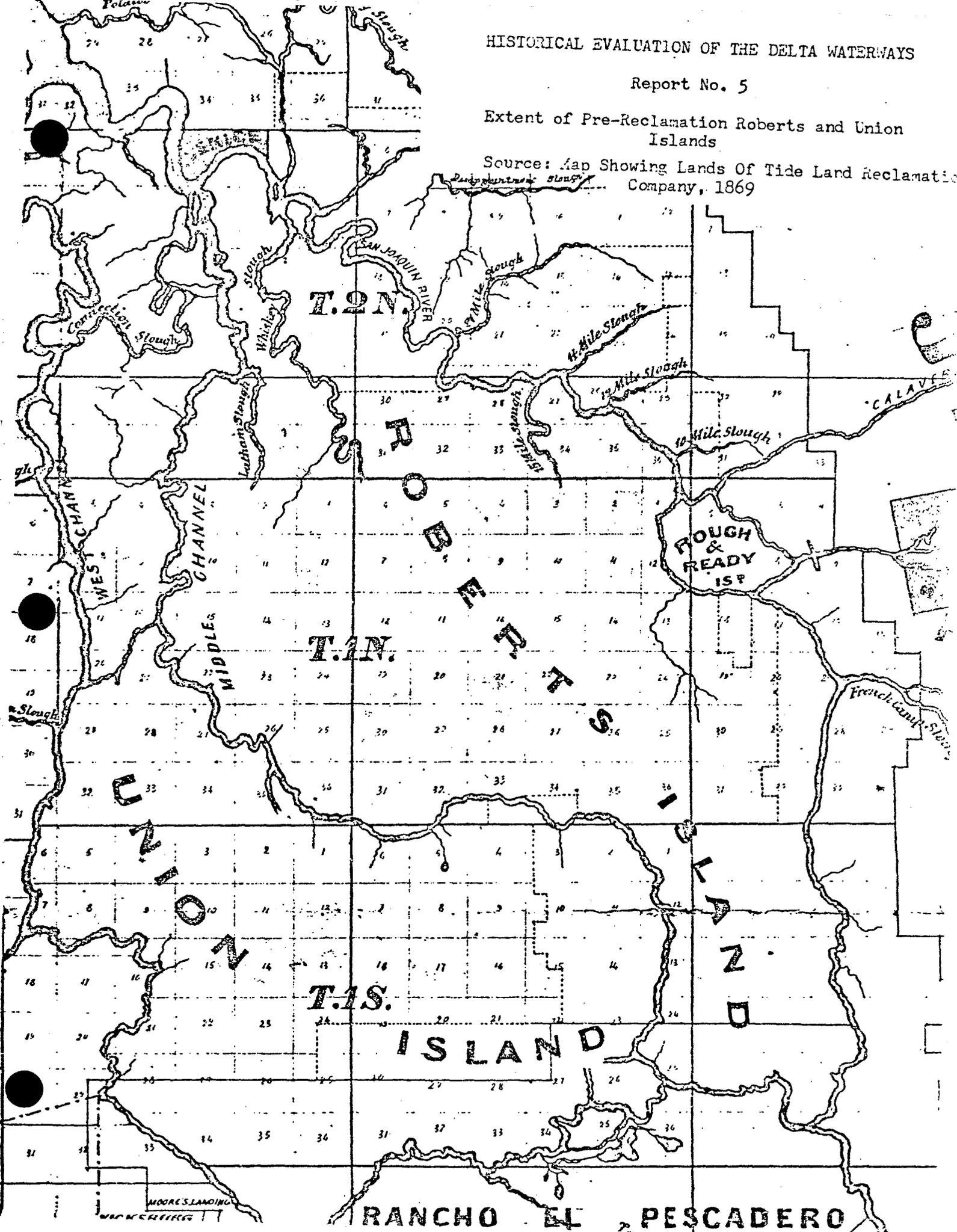
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HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 5

Extent of Pre-Reclamation Roberts and Union Islands

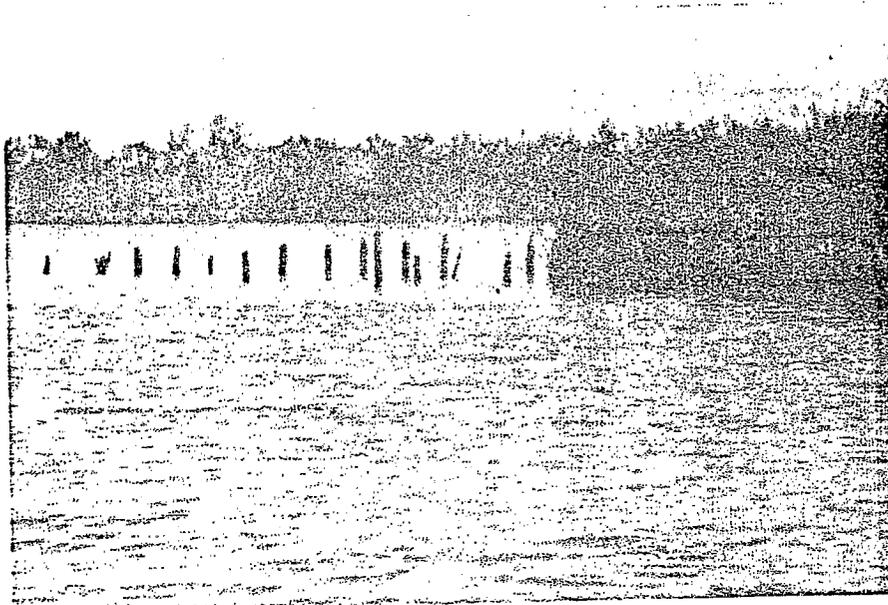
Source: Map Showing Lands Of Tide Land Reclamation Company, 1869





Mildred Island, Site 2

Example of levee reinforcement pilings
dating from the 1870s.



Mildred Island, Site 2

Example of levee reinforcement pilings
dating from the 1870s.

Pilings extend along the berm and into the
channel.

HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 6

Prepared for the State Lands Commission

Alan M. Paterson
Rand F. Herbert
Stephen R. Wee

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Lands Commission is in the process of removing navigation hazards from Delta waterways. In order to comply with federal regulations and to insure that items of historic importance are not removed or damaged, these studies have been commissioned.

II. LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF REPORT AREA

This report deals with waterways in the southern Delta. These include portions of the Middle River and Old River branches of the San Joaquin River, as well as Whisky Slough, Empire Cut, West Canal, Woodward Canal/North Victoria Canal and Victoria Canal/North Canal. These waterways adjoin parts of Roberts Island, Henning Tract (McDonald Island), Upper and Lower Jones Tracts, Bacon Island, Woodward Island, Drexler Tract, Victoria Island, Union Island, Byron Tract, Clifton Court Tract, Coney Island, Fabian Tract and portion of the mainland south of Old River. The report area lies largely within San Joaquin County with the area west of Old River lying in Contra Costa County. The successive stages of reclamation have substantially altered the geography of the islands and waterways. Union Island, for example, once included all land between Old River and Middle River from the bifurcation of those streams to about Woodward Island, covering a portion of modern Woodward Island, Victoria Island, Union Island and the Fabian Tract. (See 1869 map attached to Report No. 5)

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF LANDS IN THE REPORT AREA

Land Ownership and Reclamation

The oldest landholding in the report area, and in the lowland Delta, was the El Pescadero land grant lying along Old River at the southern edge of the report area. The Mexican land grant was given to Antonio Maria Pico by Governor Manuel Micheltoarena on November 28, 1843. The grant was not occupied prior to the American period. In 1852 Antonio Pico and General Henry M. Naglee claimed the eight-square league Rancho El Pescadero grant had their claim rejected by the special commission established to settle California's land title questions. Subsequent court action in 1856 reversed the commission's finding and confirmed the grant of over 35,000 acres. (Hoffman's Land Cases, appx., 37 in CSL Information files) Land in the report area between what became the Grant Line Canal and Old River, and a strip of land south of Old River, was held by Henry M. Naglee with the exception of parcels owned by Winters and Lammers. The Naglee, or Naglee-Burk, family retained ownership of land in the report area into the twentieth century as the eastern parts of the original land grant appear to have been sold off first. Lands in the report area passed from the control of Antoinette Naglee-Burk in 1918. (San Joaquin County, maps, 1883, 1895, 1905; San Joaquin County Assessor's maps 1892, 1902, 1918)

The construction along Old River began in 1876, with most of the activity centered between Salmon Slough and the head of Old River, At about the same time levees were built on both sides of Old River to the limits of the Pescadero Grant. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 9-11) An observer noted that "All of Gen. Naglee's levees were very carefully built, no sticks, brush or other rubbish were allowed to be put in them and the Chinese were required to break all the lumps before wheeling them out of the ditch." (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 12)

Settlers came to Union Island in the 1850's, with the first small levee being built on the Petty tract in 1857. (S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 1) The Tide Land Reclamation Company bought a substantial portion of Union Island about 1869. In 1872 over 5,000 acres at the island's eastern end passed from John Petty to Captain George Kidd, the majority of it on the occasion of Petty's divorce that forced immediate liquidation of his assets. (Irwin, fn, 83) Captain Kidd was a fascinating individual whose early career had been in the river steamer business, running independent boats in opposition to the would-be monopolists of the California Steam Navigation Company. Kidd's first steamer, the Nevada, sank after hitting a snag while racing and his second craft, the Washoe, was rammed at Benicia in 1864 by the New World. The Washoe, however, was repaired and placed back in service only to have a boiler explode during what may have been another race, resulting in several deaths. (MacMullen, 29, 61-62) Leaving a trail of shattered steamboats behind him, Captain Kidd invested briefly in Delta land and became a founder of the Bank of Stockton as well as being involved in Nevada County mining. (Pacific Coast Mining Review, 56-57)

The Tide Land Reclamation Company leveed Union Island in 1872 but those levees washed out in 1876 (Irwin, 6) though other sources indicate the company did not begin until 1876 with the entire exterior levee completed by 1878. (S.E.D. Notes, 92, 2) The Tide Land Reclamation Company encountered financial hardships and a sale of Union Island to J. P. Whitney was contemplated. Tide Land Reclamation Company owner George D. Roberts withdrew Union Island from the bargain and Whitney had to settle for Roberts Island. (Irwin, 12) The exact history of land sales in the late 1870s is difficult to piece together but in 1876 the Tide Land Reclamation Company property on Union Island and George Kidd's property passed to Thomas Hansford Williams and his partner David Bixler. (Irwin, 13; S.E.D. Notes, No. 92, 2) Williams and Bixler were investing a fortune made on the Comstock Lode where a mine thought to be worthless proved to be on top of the Big Bonanza. (See also Report No. 3) Besides buying Union Island, Williams and Bixler apparently took a substantial interest in the Tide Land Reclamation Company for in 1879 the partners were deeded the company by founder George D. Roberts to settle a debt of over \$600,000. As a result, Williams and Bixler received land on Grand Island, in the Yolo Basin and elsewhere in the Delta. (Irwin, 13)

T. H. Williams moved to the Delta to take personal charge of the reclamation effort, building the Mansion House at what was to become the northwest corner of Victoria Island but was then part of Union Island. Levees built by Williams and Bixler were substantial; 50 feet at the base

and 8 to 10 feet high; set back from the river. (Thompson, 490) However, Williams did not own the Old River frontage and in February 1878 floodwaters topped General Naglee's levee and flooded much of Union Island. Since Naglee refused to build levees as large as Williams preferred, Williams and Bixler began a new levee in 1878 running from Middle River west along the Pescadero grant line to Elk Ridge and then north to Middle River. (Irwin, 18) The levee was built with scrapers to an eight foot height except for one mile where the ground was too soft to use the horse-drawn scrapers. At that point Chinese laborers were used to complete the levee. (S.E.D. No. 92, 5) The final enclosure of Union Island by secure levees came about 1880. (Thompson, 491) At that time grain was grown on reclaimed sections of Union Island. (S.E.D. No. 92, 6)

Further reclamation activity centered on reducing the size of Union Island. The Rancho El Pescadero section had been largely severed by the grant line levee. Plat maps in 1892 show the North Canal separating Victoria Island from Union Island in for the first time. (San Joaquin County, Assessor's Map, 1892) Between 1894 and 1897 the Union Island levees were rebuilt and North Canal and the Grant Line Canal dredged. The work was performed by the Old River Land and Reclamation Company in exchange for title to Vicotira Island and a 10-year lease on western Union Island. (Irwin, 19; Thompson, 491-492)

General T. H. Williams had died in 1886. His partner, David Baxler, operated the Union Island holdings with tenants responsible for the actual cultivation of crops. In 1905 the island was still held almost exclusively by Bixler and Williams' heirs. (San Joaquin County, map, 1905) Following Bixler's death in 1908 portions of the island were sold. It appears that although the levees were well constructed and the island was reasonably safe from flooding, the Bixler property had not all been fully developed. As late as 1930 major parts of the Bixler estate (the land remaining in family hands) were without adequate irrigation facilities and not leveled for irrigated agriculture. (Irwin, 48-49, 53) The result was that the property still in Bixler hands was suited primarily to dry-farmed crops such as grain or beans. The 1920-21 Booster Edition of the Byron Times contains laudatory articles on Union Island farms and farmers but a careful reading indicates that while the Bixler estate was harvesting grain, Bonetti Ranch, Ferguson Brothers and Col. Daniel Burns were growing sugar beets, onions and potatoes as well as grain and corn. Union Island was producing irrigated crops but the Bixler holdings seem to have been lagging behind. (Byron Times, 1920-21, 184, 185, 188, 189) In this condition the remains of Bixler's holding were nearly bankrupt in the 1920s and 1930s. The change to higher value crops began about 1930 with an asparagus lease near Fish Camp on Middle River, and in 1943 over 1,500 acres were sold to pay for more irrigation development on the remaining lands. (Irwin, 48-50) From the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s the practice of leasing was gradually curtailed to bring the land under direct control of the owners. (Irwin, 57-58) Today the remaining Bixler acreage on Union Island is under 3,000 acres of tomatoes, sugar beets, alfalfa, asparagus and walnuts. The history of the Williams and Bixler holdings and the eventual David Bixler estate is an interesting example of how farm operation and crop practices changed over time in the southern Delta.

Victoria Island was a creation of the dredgers sometime in the 1890s when it was cut off from Union Island. As is often the case, the pattern of ownership is somewhat tangled. The Old River Land and

Reclamation Company was formed in 1896 with John Herd, an associate of the Glasgow-Californian Land Company and a major speculator, as its chairman. (Articles of Incorporation, Old River Land and Reclamation Company) In accordance with the agreement with Bixler, title to Victoria Island was transferred to the company in 1898. (Articles of Incorporation, Victoria Farms) The following year Pierce and Spaulding purchased the Old River Land and Reclamation Company, hiring Old River Dredging Company to dredge and pump the island. Old River Dredging Company was itself created in 1899 with John Herd owning 996 of its 1,000 shares of stock. (Old River Dredging Company, record book) Thus it seems that Herd gained title to the island, sold it and was immediately hired to complete its reclamation works. The complications of ownership were by no means over, for San Joaquin County plats in subsequent years show ownership in the hands of the Victoria Island Company until 1911 when I. L. Borden's name appears for the first time. (San Joaquin County Assessor's maps 1901, 1902, 1906, 1911) However Borden's Victoria Farms Incorporated did not buy out Pierce and Spaulding's Old River Land and Reclamation Company until 1913. (Articles of Incorporation, Victoria Farms) It seems obvious that the investors and their attorneys were engaged in dealings that can not be adequately understood from this distance.

Ivey L. Borden was more than just another absentee corporate owner. The gentleman farmer of Victoria Island lived some of the time in the Mansion House and rented out some of his land with the remainder farmed on shares. The island had 40 tenant farms with camps, each covering about 200 acres and each having river frontage for the shipment of crops. (Byron Times, 1912, 72) Borden proposed the construction of a highway across the Delta in 1914, contributed \$20,000 plus right-of-way to the project and worked to convince his neighbors to do likewise. (Byron Times, 1914-15, 89) The result was the Borden Highway from Brentwood to Stockton that was completed by 1920. The road is known today as State Route 4.

Upper and Lower Jones Tracts were once part of Roberts Island. The area was owned by the Tide Land Reclamation Company from 1869 to 1876, then by J. P. Whitney for perhaps a year and next by the Glasgow-Californian Land Company. (Tide Land Reclamation Co., map, 1869; San Joaquin County Assessor's maps 1876, 1879) The old maps make it difficult to determine exactly how much Glasgow-Californian Land Company or its predecessor, the Tide Land Reclamation Company, did to reclaim the part of Roberts Island now known as the Jones tracts but it seems that the companies reclaimed only that land today identified as Roberts Island. In 1894 the Glasgow-Californian Land Company transferred title of the unclaimed tract to the California-Nevada Land Improvement Company. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1894) The Santa Fe Railway went through by 1900 splitting the tract into upper and lower halves. Levees were built in 1902 but both tracts were inundated in 1906 and again in 1907. (USBR, Report DL-8, 7) By 1903 Upper Jones Tract was owned by Middle

Farming Company and Lower Jones Tract was held by Middle River Navigation and Canal Company. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1903) Middle River Navigation and Canal Company was organized by Los Angeles investors and run by F. H. Rindge and Lee Phillips. (See Reports Nos. 4 and 5) Middle River Farming Company was organized by the same men in 1901 with F. H. Rindge controlling the majority of the shares. (Articles of Incorporation, Middle River Farming Company) In 1907 the Rindge Land and Navigation Company took over both tracts. (San Joaquin County, Assessor's Map, 1907) The Rindge Land and Navigation Company was organized by the Los Angeles capitalists in 1905 with most of the original shares owned by Stanley F. McClung. George Cochran was the first president of the concern but by 1912 M. K. Rindge had assumed that office. (Articles of Incorporation, Rindge Land and Navigation Company; Byron Times, 1912, 68-69)

Byron Tract, to the west of Old River, was initially leveed in 1870-1873 but the levees were topped by a flood in 1875. They were enlarged in 1877-79 but even so the tract was subject to occasional flooding. It was finally reclaimed fully about 1900. (USBR, Report DL-7, 6) In 1905 the tract was owned by California Reclaimed Lands Company. (Contra Costa County, map, 1905) That company was formed in 1905 by John Herd, F. A. West and the Wilhoits and suspended five years later. (Articles of Incorporation, California Reclaimed Lands) By 1914, the tract was divided between West and Wilhoit and the Baird estate. (Contra Costa County, map, 1914)

Clifton Court Tract and Coney Island were separated by the dredging of the West Canal. Clifton Court Tract was reclaimed in 1898 and subsequently subdivided. (USBR, Report DL-7, 6; Contra Costa County, maps, 1914, 1930, 1938) Most of Clifton Court Tract was inundated in the 1960s to form the Clifton Court Forebay of the California State Water Project. Coney Island, covering about 1,000 acres, was reclaimed in 1893 and farmed by the Righetti family of San Francisco. (Byron Times, 1918, 20)

The histories of Roberts Island, Bacon Island and the Henning Tract have been covered in previous reports and need not be repeated here. Drexler Tract, an appendage of Roberts Island, may have been reclaimed about 1911. (USBR, Report DL-8, 9-10) Prior to the turn-of-the-century, the 3,000 acre tract was in divided ownership but by 1901 Jacob Levi controlled it all. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Map, 1901) In 1908 Levi shared the tract with Elsie Drexler and by 1911 Drexler was in full control. (San Joaquin County Assessor's maps, 1908, 1911) A few years later the Byron Times reported that Mrs. Drexler had placed the tract in a trust, the proceeds of the farming to be used to finance an orphan's and crippled children's home in Palo Alto. (Byron Times, 1916, 100)

Agriculture

(Source, except as noted: Bureau of Reclamation, Delta Lowlands Service Area Investigations, Report Areas DL-7, DL-8, DL-10)

Union Island saw extensive grain plantings in the nineteenth century as did most of California. As outlined above, crops by 1920 included potatoes, sugar beets and onions. Crop records since 1924 show that pattern continuing through the 1920s with asparagus acreage growing after 1930 until by the late 1930s half the island's farm land was in that crop. Grain was second only to asparagus through 1955, and alfalfa was also a major crop.

Fabian Tract had only half its acreage irrigated through the mid-1920s. Grain and corn were the area's dominant crops until the late 1930s when alfalfa and asparagus took over. In the 1950s tomatoes also became important. The importance of alfalfa, not a crop widely grown in the Delta, may in part be attributed to the southern Delta's proximity to dairy farms on the mainland.

Victoria Island's crop pattern under Williams and Bixler ownership and the Old River Land and Reclamation Company is unknown although it can safely be assumed that grain growing predominated at first, giving way later to potatoes, onions, beans and beets. In 1911, I. L. Borden planted 4,000 of the 7,300 acres to barley, while the following year saw potatoes, beans and onions as the predominant crops. Potatoes were expected to cover 5,000 acres in 1913. (Byron Times, 1912, 72) In the 1920s grain accounted for the largest acreage, followed by potatoes, corn and beans. Asparagus was planted first in 1931 and by 1948 it covered 6,000 acres with corn and grain also being grown. In the early 1930s the island grew several hundred acres of spearmint and peppermint. (Byron Times, 1932-33)

Grain and corn dominated both Upper and Lower Jones tracts in the 1920s and 1930s although significant acreages of potatoes were also grown, especially on Lower Jones Tract. At Middle River, the Rindge Land and Navigation Company established at Middle River. (Byron Times, 1916, 103; Byron Times, 1926-27, 189) Following World War II the area was devoted almost exclusively to asparagus.

On Byron Tract grain was the staple crop with potatoes having a considerable acreage in the 1920s and asparagus growing in importance from the late 1930s. Clifton Court Tract saw corn as the predominant crop until the mid-1930s when asparagus plantings came to dominate the tract.

Coney Island was devoted to one crop at a time except in 1926 and 1927. Grain was grown in 1924-25, corn, beans and pasture in 1926, corn through the early 1930s then asparagus until the early 1950s when corn returned.

Until 1931 significant portions of Drexler Tract were left unfarmed or were planted to dry farmed grain. The Byron Times reported in 1912 that alfalfa, potatoes, onions, celery, corn, beans and barley were grown on 15 tenant farms rented for \$25 per acre. (Byron Times, 1912, 76) In the 1920s corn, potatoes, beans and sugar beets were grown. In the 1930s grain, corn, beans and pasture predominated, giving way to asparagus after World War II.

Transportation

The southern Delta was far from the major steamboat lines but of course steamers served the early settlers. In 1912 it was reported that "steamboats with barges make daily trips between San-Francisco, Stockton, and the Victoria Island landings." (Byron Times, 1912, 72) Two years later the steamer visits were described as "several times each week." (Byron Times, 1914-15, 91) Steamers were gradually replaced in the first decades of the twentieth century by gasoline or diesel launches and tugs. Barges were a principal means of handling the area's crops, probably until the 1940s. Photographs in the Byron Times indicate that in general barges used the dredged cuts such as the Grant Line Canal rather than Old River, which becomes narrow, twisting and rather shallow in the area upstream from Victoria Island.

The Santa Fe Railway was built across the Delta about 1900, and railroad sidings were provided for shipments along its tracks, notably at Middle River in the report area. Surface transportation, by road and easy connection to the Southern Pacific, was available south and west of Old River. The Borden Highway, with bridges over Old and Middle Rivers, was built about 1915-1920, increasing the availability of surface transportation. Ferries appear on various maps, particularly in the Union Island-Fabian Tract vicinity, but many are poorly documented. A ferry once linked Coney Island to Union Island and the Clifton Court Ferry ran between Union Island and Clifton Court. The Woodward Island ferry ran from Upper Jones Tract. The semi-public Mildred Island ferry and a private Zuckerman ferry to Henning Tract both cross Empire Cut from Lower Jones Tract. The report area, in other words, has been accessible to a variety of modes of transportation.

IV. SITE SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

Objects identified by State Lands Commission as subject to removal have been researched as fully as possible and evaluated as to their historic values and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

The sites are numbered according to their location adjoining Bacon Island (BNI), Clifton Court Tract (CCT), Coney Island (CI), Drexler Tract (DT), Henning Tract (HET), Lower Jones Tract (LJT), Mildred Island (MII), Roberts Island (RI), Union Island (UI), Upper Jones Tract (UJT), Victoria Island (VI) and Woodward Island (WI). Sites along Old River adjoining Fabian Tract on the north or the mainland on the south have been labelled "Pescadero-Old River" (P-OR) for the purposes of this report. The location are shown on the attached maps based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration navigation chart "Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers," revised April 1977.

BN-7A

Location: Middle River adjacent to southeast Bacon Island.

Description: Three large pilings in a row with 5-6 broken pilings in a row nearby. A walkway, apparently fashioned of steel pipe, extends from the levee to the water.

History: By 1911 one structure had been built near the area identified as Clifton Court Landing. (rideout, map, 1910; USGS, map, 1911) By 1931, eight structures were present, one on the river side of the levee. (USC&GS, map, 1931)

Evaluation: The area was developed early in the twentieth century and today still has numerous structures nearby including what may be a small grain elevator. The pilings were probably part of a landing or may even have helped support a structure shown on the river side of the levee in 1931. In either case the site lacks significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

CI-1

Location: Old River adjacent to northeastern Coney Island.

Description: A small landing made of two pairs of pilings and planking extending toward the levee.

History: Structures have appeared at the location since at least 1911. (USGS, map, 1911; USC&GS, map, 1931; USGS air photos, 1970) No other relevant information was located.

Evaluation: The landing is small and of unknown age. It was probably built in connection with agriculturally-related structures at that location. It has no significant associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

DT-1

Location: Middle River near State Highway 4 bridge, adjacent to Drexler Tract.

Description: Numerous square pilings of varying heights along the levee.

History: Rideout's 1910 map referred to Drexler Tract as Levi Tract and this site as Levi No. 1 (Rideout, map, 1910) In 1911 a "steel warehouse" was at the site on the river side of the levee. (USGS, map, 1911) Structures appear on the levee side as recently as 1968, (USC&GS, map, 1931; USGS, map, 1968) sometimes referred to as "Drexler Warehouse." (Behrens, map, 1933) Amazingly, San Joaquin County Assessor's files contain no evidence, past or present, at the site.

Evaluation: The pilings probably supported a large warehouse structure at the site, the actual building being of steel construction. Bureau of Reclamation data indicated that Drexler Tract was reclaimed about 1911, when the structure appears on the USGS map. Presumably it was

not built long before 1911. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HET-6

Location: Empire Cut adjacent to southeast Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description: Four intact dolphins and numerous piles broken off near the waterline.

History: Camp No. 20 was located at the site (USC&GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1933 and two large waterfront structures existed in 1931. (USC&GS, map, 1931) No other information was located.

Evaluation: The dolphins and piles were probably associated with the Camp No. 20 landing. The appearance of similar large dolphins at camp locations on Turner Cut (see Report No. 5) indicates that twentieth century camps on McDonald Island often had very substantial landings. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

HET-7

Location: Empire Cut adjacent to southern Henning Tract (McDonald Island).

Description: A row of twenty or more pilings, all broken off near the waterline, some apparently double rowed.

History: The area was known as Camp No. 21B with one large structure on the levee. (USC&GS, map, 1931) The site was developed beginning about 1920. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: If the structure on the levee in 1931 extended beyond the levee, these piles could have supported the building. Otherwise, the piles were probably associated with the Camp No. 20 landing. In either case, the site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

LJT-1

Location: Middle River adjacent to Lower Jones Tract in the area of the Santa Fe Railway bridge.

Description: Over 50 piles, most substantial and evenly spaced along the with clusters at other locations.

History: The area has been developed since at least the turn-of-the-century when the Santa Fe Railway extended its track through the area, making the conjunction of railroad and river transportation a natural focal point. The area may once have been known as McCarthy's Landing but it is generally recongnized as Middle River Post Office. In 1911 it was a community of 18 structures, one of them a school. (USGS, map, 1911) Later a large building was erected by the water and a pontoon bridge extended to a berm from which a ferry crossed to Bacon Island.

As noted above, a potato flour mill and a cannery were established at Middle River by the Rindge Land and Navigation Company. The cannery appears to have been built on piles. (Byron Times, 1926-27, 189)

Evaluation: The numerous pilings at the site cannot be accurately identified with any of the many activities that have taken place at Middle River. Some may have supported structures, others may have been barge or boat landings. The even spacing of some of the pilings alongside the levee is reminiscent of levee reinforcing. The pilings are so numerous that they undoubtedly represent more than one purpose. None of the evidence gathered suggests that the site had any unique characteristics of significant historical associations. The site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

LJT-2

Location: Middle River adjacent to western Lower Jones Tract.

Description: One pile.

History: The site was listed as Camp No. 16 in 1910 (Rideout, map, 1910) but the 1911 USGS and 1931 Coast and Geodetic Survey maps provide no information. Maps for 1952 and 1968 show structures in the area (USGS, maps, 1952, 1968) and in 1972 the Assessor's office declared the structures obsolete. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: Some activity took place at the site which may have been known as Camp No. 16, but the lack of information and the failure of the site to appear on usually comprehensive maps indicates that it was not an important site. The solitary pilings has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

LJT-3

Location: Empire Cut adjacent to northern Lower Jones Tract.

Description: Single row of 10 piles, most broken off near the waterline.

History: A labor camp was located in the area as early as 1910. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records; USGS, map, 1911) The camp may have been known as Camp No. 12. (Behrens, map, 1933) Besides the labor camp and associated structures, an asparagus packing plant was located there in 1949. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: The pilings are probably the remains of a camp landing. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

MII-1A

Location: Empire Cut adjacent to Mildred Island.

Description: One pile at the edge of the levee.

History: In 1931 a "wooden pole" for an overhead cable was near the site and Empire Landing, a site structures, was in the vicinity. (USC&GS, map, 1931) An equipment shed was located near there in 1940 and a house in 1952. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: It is impossible to ascertain if the pile was associated with an overhead power crossing noted in 1931 or with some other purpose. Since the area was never well developed, it seems rather unlikely that the pile was associated with a landing. No evidence suggests that the site has any significant historical associations and it is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

P-OR-1

Location: Old River, south side, south of Delta-Mendota Canal intake channel.

Description: Three very small piles, resembling sticks.

History: The earliest documented activity at or near the location was a Corps of Engineers permit for an underwater powerline in 1932. (Corps, permit file) Assessor's files show numerous structures but the earliest is dated 1955. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: Most documented development at the site has been relatively recent and none of it clearly involves structures in the water. The piles have no historical significance and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

P-OR-2

Location: Old River, south side.

Description: Five broken off pilings in a row.

History: By 1931, two structures were near the site (USC&GS, map, 1931) and about 1955 a 10 horsepower drainage pump was installed. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: It seems unlikely that the piles were part of a landing, in part because the site has not been extensively developed and in part because shippers had more convenient access to road and railroad transportation. At other points in the Delta, rows of undocumented pilings have been identified as levee reinforcement. It seems likely that these piles were driven to reinforce the levee. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register

P-OR-3

Location: Old River, north side, adjacent to Fabian Tract.

Description:; Two piles.

History: A single structure existed near the site in 1931 (USC&GS, map, 1931), possibly the house the assessor estimated to date from 1935. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records) Subsequently a labor camp was built in 1965. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records) Tony Busalacci noted that roads were constructed early in this area, making waterborne transportation less significant here. (Busalacci interview) When barges were used to haul crops north of Old River they were likely to use the Grant Line and Fabian and Bell canals.

Evaluation: The pilings were probably not associated with a landing. It seems likely that they were either levee reinforcement or possibly siphon guards. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

P-OR-4

Location: Old River, adjacent to Fabian Tract.

Description: Single piling near irrigation facility.

History: White House Landing was at the site. (USGS, map, 1911; Corps, map, 1913; Corps, map, 1917; USC&GS, map, 1931) A labor camp is located south of the site with buildings dating from 1925 to 1945. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records) The Corps of Engineers permitted the installation of dolphins by the Westside Irrigation District in 1949. (Corps, permit file)

Evaluation: Landings in Old River, on the Fabian Tract probably served those landowners without direct access to the straighter canals to the north. The piling was probably associated with White House Landing, a landing dating back to the early twentieth century. The site has no outstanding historical significance and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

P-OR-5

Location: Old River, south side.

Description: Cluster of numerous 4 x 4 inch piles with two steel pipe "pilings".

History: The site is near the border of two parcels, the south one having been developed between 1918 and 1930, while the northern parcel has structures dating from 1940. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Record) Corps of Engineers' permits for vertical pumps in the area date from the 1970s and are too recent to apply to these piles.

Evaluation: The configuration of the pilings suggests a foundation for a small structure, perhaps an unlicensed pump station. Tony Busalacci supports that identification. (Busalacci interview) The site is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

RI-3

Location: Whisky Slough adjacent to Roberts Island.

Description: Four piles near the levee, broken off near the waterline.

History: A structure was at the site in 1911 (USGS, map, 1911) and four structures were there in 1931. (USC&GS, map, 1931) Later maps show a floodgate in the area. (USGS, maps, 1952, 1968)

Evaluation: The piles may have been associated with structures at the site but their purpose is uncertain. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

UI-1

Location: North Canal, adjacent to northwestern Union Island.

Description: Evenly spaced row of light pilings.

History: A structure was nearby in 1911 (USGS, map, 1911) while several structures were located near the site in 1931, known as Camp No. 8. (USC&GS, map, 1931)

Evaluation: The area was developed early in the twentieth century so pilings near the site could be associated with a camp landing. However, the appearance and spacing of the pilings suggests levee reinforcement. In either event the site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

UI-2

Location: Old River, adjacent to western Union Island.

Description: Three pilings just north of a bridge connecting Union Island to Coney Island.

History: The bridge is a private structure replacing a ferry at the location shown in 1931. An overhead powerline also appeared in 1931. (USC&GS, map, 1931) Camp No. 2 or Kuchuk Landing may have been at or near the site. (Rideout, map, 1910) Tony Busalacci thought the configuration of the pilings might indicate a siphon guard. (Busalacci Interview)

Evaluation: The piles might have been associated with a ferry, an overhead powerline, a siphon guard or even a camp landing. In any event, the site is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

UJT-1

Location: Middle River adjacent to southwestern Upper Jones Tract.

Description: Several piles, all broken off near the waterline.

History: Jones Landing (Rideout, map, 1910) or Camp No. 21 (Behrens, map, 1933) or both Camps No. 21 and 22 (USC&GS, map, 1931) were located at or near the site. The camps were not well developed; in 1931 both Camp No. 21 and Camp No. 22 had only two structures apiece.

Evaluation: The piles probably were associated with a camp landing. There is no information to suggest that the site has any significant historical associations and it is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

UJT-2

Location: Middle River adjacent to western Upper Jones Tract.

Description: Twenty or more piles, some with crossbars and many broken off, and a wooden ramp extending into the water.

History: A camp has occupied the site since early in the twentieth century, though the name has been changed from Aillers Landing (Rideout, map, 1910) to Camp No. 6 (USCHGS, map, 1931) to Camp No. 19 or 19½. (Behrens, map, 1933) No more than three structures have occupied the site. (USC&GS, map, 1931; San Joaquin County Assessor's Records)

Evaluation: The piles are the remains of a solidly constructed camp landing, perhaps dating to the 1920s or 1930s. The small wooden ramp may have been used to launch small boats. There is no evidence to suggest that the site has any significant historical associations and it is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

UJT-3

Location: Middle River adjacent to Upper Jones Tract.

Description: Two piles, widely separated.

History: The site was near Tai On Landing (Rideout, map, 1910) and was later known as Camp No. 3. (USC&GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1933)

Evaluation: The piles were probably associated with a camp landing that may date from the turn-of-the-century. Uncertainties surrounding the purpose of the pilings and the lack of any significant historical associations make the two piles ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-1

Location: North Victoria Canal adjacent to northern Victoria Island.

Description: Two piles.

History: The site is in the vicinity of Camps No. 7 and 8. (Rideout, map, 1910; USC&GS, map, 1931; Behrens, map, 1933) Pumping plants were listed for 1911 (USGS, map, 1911) and 1952 (USGS, map, 1952), along with assorted structures.

Evaluation: The piles were probably associated with a landing serving Camps No. 7 and 8. The site is badly deteriorated and there is nothing to suggest significant historical association. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-2

Location: Middle River adjacent to northeastern Victoria Island.

Description: Three piles, two of them near one another.

History: The area has an overhead powerline crossing and the 1931 map shows wooden poles at the site. (USC&GS, map, 1931) No other information was located.

Evaluation: The piles are probably part of the overhead cable crossing system that preceded the modern steel towers existing today. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-3

Location: Middle River adjacent to northeastern Victoria Island.

Description: A fence (barbed wire?) across a shallow slough in a berm.

History: The slough in the berm apparently existed as early as 1911. (USGS, map, 1911) No other information was located.

Evaluation: The fence is completely undocumented and without historical significance. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-4

Location: Victoria Canal adjacent to southwestern Victoria Island.

Description: A double row of piles, ten in each row.

History: The Rideout 1910 map is unclear but the location seems to correspond to Camp No. 17. (Rideout, map, 1910) County records show structures built in 1973 and 1974. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records) No other information is available.

Evaluation: The piles suggest a well-constructed camp landing but the failure of maps to show a landing is unusual. The site is therefore virtually undocumented. It has no apparent significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-5

Location: Victoria Canal adjacent to southeast Victoria Island.

Description: Single pile located between the berms that separate Victoria Canal from North Canal.

History: Camp No. 20 (USGS, map, 1911), Camp No. 21 (USGS, map, 1911; Behrens, map, 1933) or Camps No. 17 and 18 (USC&GS) was/were located near the spot. However, no record of any structure in the berm area exist.

Evaluation: The pile cannot be explained by reference to nearby camps because of its location. No satisfactory explanation has been found. The pile has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-6

Location: Victoria Canal near junction with Old River, adjacent to Victoria Island.

Description: Small boat wreck with only a few unidentifiable wooden pieces above water.

History: No information was located.

Evaluation: The remains suggest a craft about the size of a rowboat but it is too deteriorated to make any further identification. The appearance of the remains and the absence of information indicate that the wreck is not historically significant and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

VI-7

Location: Old River adjacent to western Victoria Island, south of the Highway 4 bridge.

Description: Row of six tall piles.

History: Camp 34 was near the site. (Rideout, map, 1911; USC&GS, map, 1931) More recently the area had a marina known as "Ben's Marina," (Erickson, 30) with dock and floats built in 1965 and other structures added in 1968. (San Joaquin County Assessor's Records) No permit was issued for the marina but the Corps of Engineers attempted to bring the owner into compliance. The marina burned several years ago according to San Joaquin County Sheriff's Deputys assigned to river patrol.

Evaluation: The six piles were almost certainly associated with the marina built in the 1960s. The site is without significant historical associations and is not eligible for National Register of Historic Places.

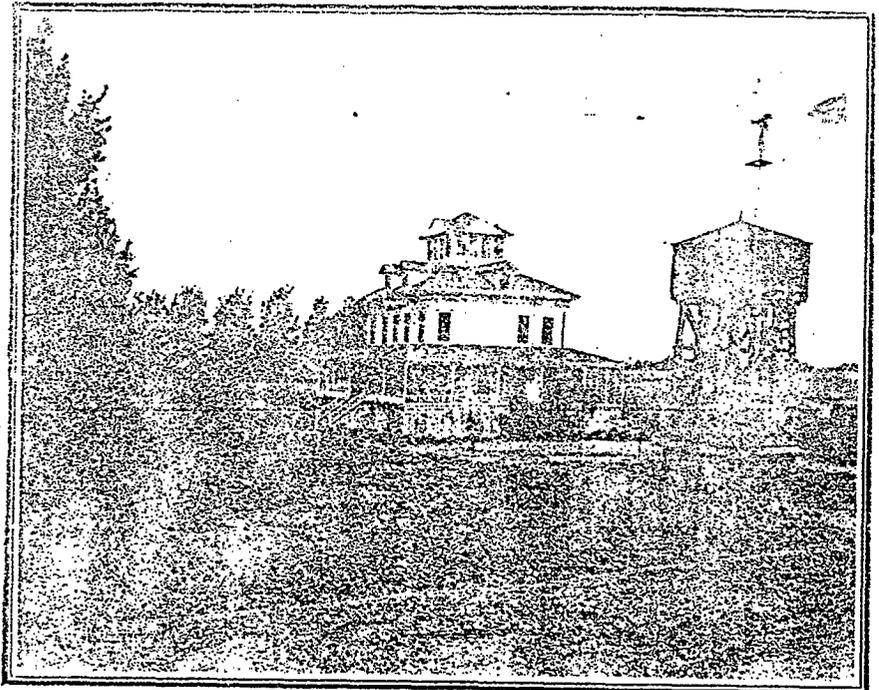
VI-8

Location: Old River adjacent to northwestern Victoria Island.

Description: Five piles in a row.

History: About 1880 General T. H. Williams built the Mansion House near the site, then part of Union Island. (Byron, Times, 1912, 72) Mansion House existed until less than twenty years ago, a two-story white structure with a porch surrounding it.

I.L. Borden, the later owner of Victoria Island, used Mansion House for entertaining. His 125 foot long steamer, Victory, stopped at the Mansion House Landing, described as a "string of piles." (Busalacci interview)



FAMOUS MANSION HOUSE

Country Home of I. L. Borden on Victoria Island, Historical Show Place of Central California

From a photograph by Logan, taken expressly for the Fourth Booster Edition of the Byron Times

Evaluation: The piles were once part of the Mansion House landing. The house is now gone without a trace and the landing has deteriorated to the five remaining piles. Though Mansion House was an historical landmark for years the landing itself had no unusual features and by itself had no outstanding historical significance. In its deteriorated condition the site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

WI-2

Location: Middle River adjacent to northeastern Woodward Island.

Description: Several piles, located on either side of Middle River.

History: The site is the location of an overhead powerline crossing, and has been since at least 1931. (USC&GS, map, 1931)

Evaluation: Documentary evidence and visual evidence on the inspection cruise confirm that the piles were part of the power-line support system prior to the modern towers now in place. The site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

WI-3

Location: Middle River just above Woodward Canal, adjacent to Woodward Island.

Description: Single pile.

History: No information whatsoever was located on the site; no maps indicated any activity in the immediate area.

Evaluation: The absence of documentation suggests that the site has no significant historical associations and is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

V. CONCLUSION

Objects identified as scheduled for removal by the State Lands Commission have been researched and evaluation in terms of their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places to determine whether or not they should in fact be removed.

The majority of sites in this report area were probably associated with camp landings, although overhead power line supports and possible levee reinforcement pilings have also been seen. All the sites are deteriorated, often to the point where an interpretation of the exact function of a piling is somewhat conjectural. It would be difficult to accurately reconstruct the original appearance of these sites.

Two points in the area once supported interesting activities or structures. Mansion House on Victoria Island was a well-known landmark until its destruction in comparatively recent years. Middle River, where the Santa Fe Railway crosses the channel of that name, has seen a great deal of activity including a potato flour mill and a cannery built by the Rindge Land and Navigation Company as well as other structures and landing facilities. The structures and landings have disappeared, leaving a profusion of pilings that could be identified with specific purposes only with some difficulty, if at all. The landings at Mansion House and at Middle River and the structural supports at Middle River appear to have been no different from landings or support pilings commonly found today in the Delta and along other waterfronts. Thus, although the general locations are not without historical interest the pilings are virtually the only remaining physical evidence and are not by themselves significant enough to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.

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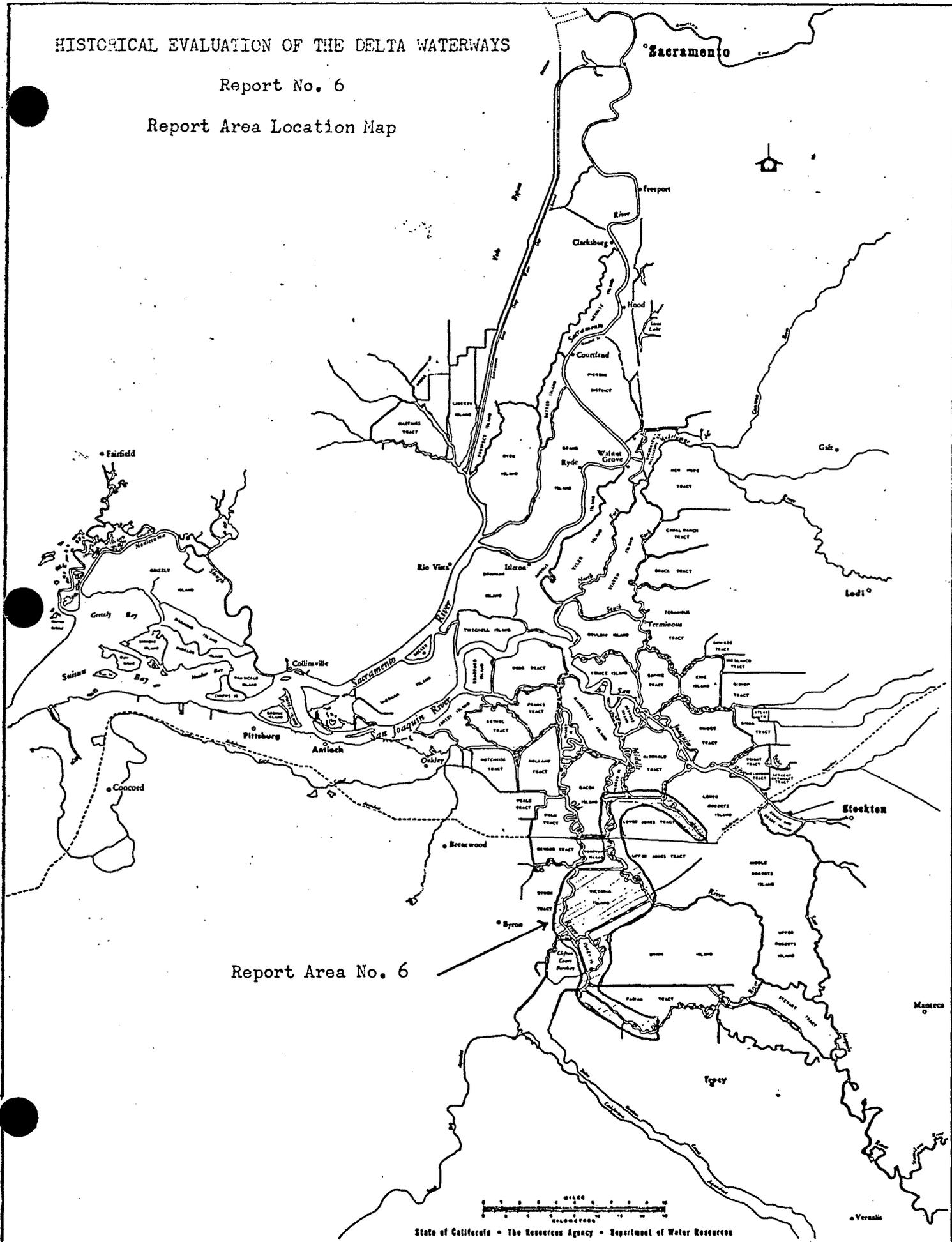
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HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

Report No. 6

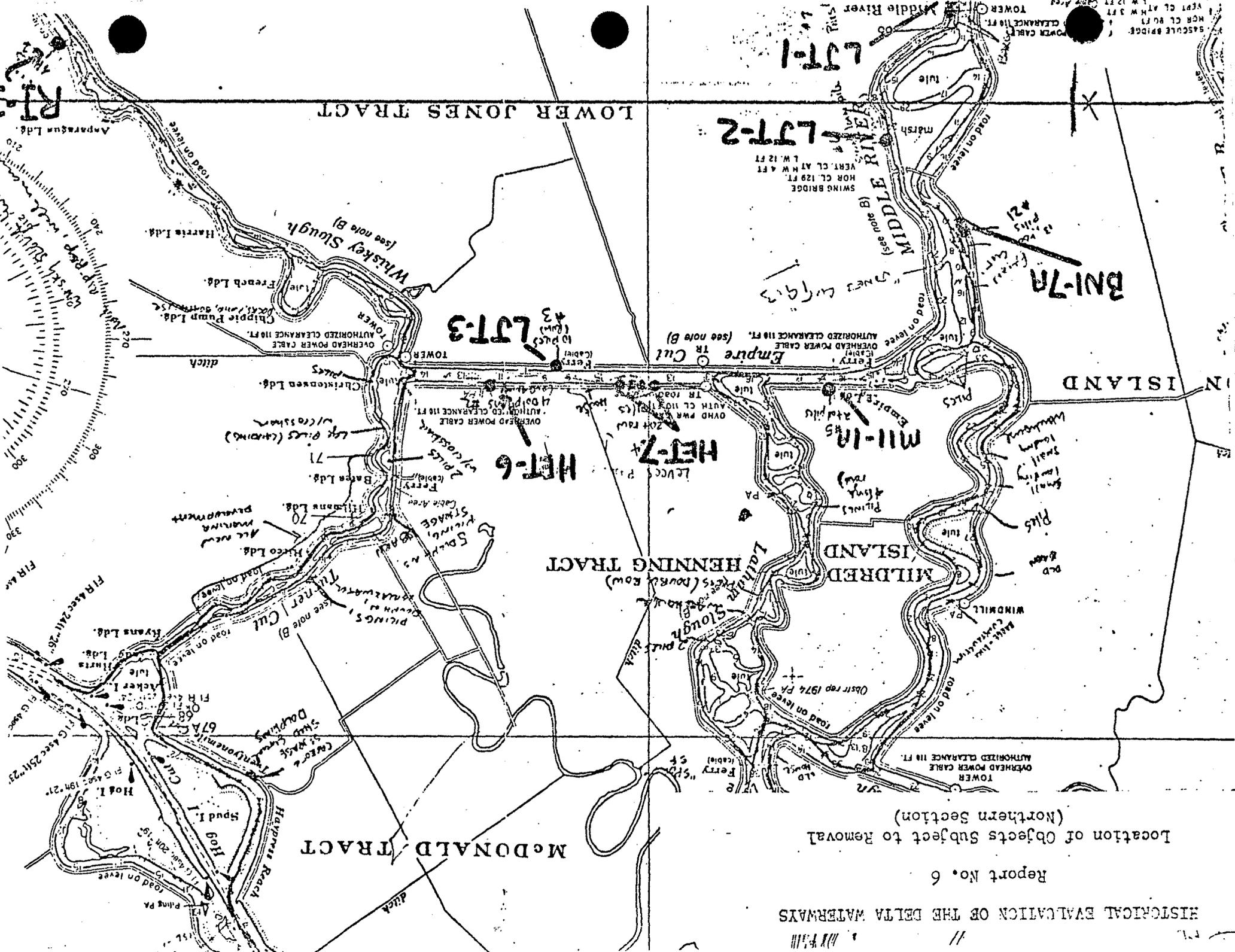
Report Area Location Map



Report Area No. 6

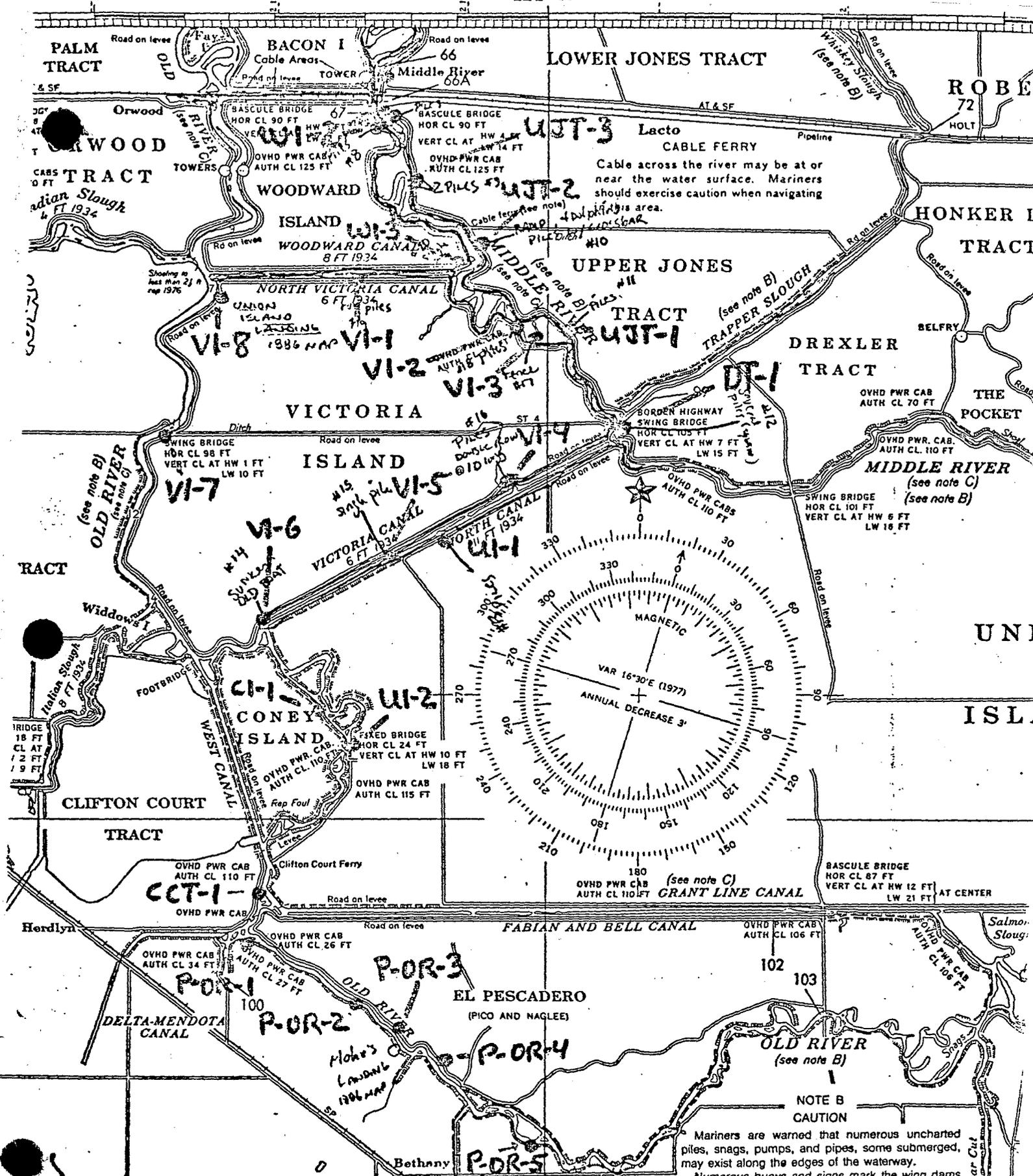
State of California • The Resources Agency • Department of Water Resources

Location of Objects Subject to Removal
(Northern Section)



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C-076044



HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE DELTA WATERWAYS

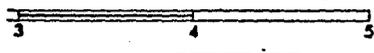
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Location of Objects Subject to Removal

**NOTE B
CAUTION**

Mariners are warned that numerous uncharted piles, snags, pumps, and pipes, some submerged, may exist along the edges of the waterway. Numerous buoys and signs mark the wing dams along the Sacramento River. Mariners should never attempt to pass between the warning buoys and the shore.

(see note C)
Holly Sugar Factory



C-076043

C-076045