

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ARVIN AND DINUBA

Before the analysis and comparison of the social picture of the two communities can be meaningful, it is necessary to have a clear picture of their resources, physical setting, and historical development.

ARVIN

Arvin lies south and east of Bakersfield, about 10 miles from the highway running eastward to Arizona and about the same distance from the highway south to Los Angeles. The climate is that of a desert, with less than 10 inches average annual rainfall. The soil has been built into alluvial fans by streams out of the mountains to the east and is of excellent quality. The farming area is quite flat, with a very gentle slope to the north and west. A few miles east of Arvin are the foothills of the Tehachapi Range, bare of trees but covered with good range grass. Most of the land in these foothills belongs to the great El Tejon ranch. To the south of Arvin lies undeveloped land, though more and more of this is now being cultivated by the use of deep wells and heavy-duty pumps. There is still considerable land available for development in this area, but unless the water supply is augmented it is doubtful if sufficient water is available for the continued irrigation of lands now using ground waters. The land to the north and west has for a long while been held in very large holdings, and most of it is now owned and operated by the DiGiorgio Fruit Corp. The community is bounded on the north by a small draw which is often rendered impassable by floods. Westward from the town there is a large area of moderately large farms, and this extends unbroken into the neighboring communities of Weedpatch and Lamont. Weedpatch derives its name from the fact that after the spring floods weeds in this area grow over the head of a man on horseback. It was the earliest community in the area, but at present is merely a crossroads center. Lamont, north of Weedpatch, has come to be a large center for laborers. Neither of these communities is as active commercially as Arvin, however, and neither of them presents a great threat with respect to trade potentials. For instance, the county has decided to place the proposed high school at Arvin rather than near the other two communities.

HISTORY

Arvin lies in the shadow of one of the oldest large ranches in the State—the El Tejon. But this ranch apparently has had little or no direct effect upon the community. Much of the flat land around Arvin was homesteaded at about the turn of the century. In 1910 a colony