

In 1899 a high school was established. During these early years additional land was constantly being brought under irrigation, and the creation of small farming units continued. By 1900 there were three general stores, a furniture store and funeral parlor, a newspaper, one or two doctors, a hotel, two smithies, two livery stables, and a packing shed. A basis for social participation was also established, with at least three churches, a community hall in which groups could meet and amateur theatricals were performed, and a public park in which regular band concerts were given. The reverse of this bright coin of the gay nineties was a "Chinatown," with its saloon and red-light district.

Dinuba was incorporated in 1906, and since that time has had its own local government. A second newspaper was started in 1903, a water system was developed the same year; the year before that a bank was set up by local capital, and in 1910 a second bank was organized. In 1915 the first general large public-works development was undertaken.

During the First World War prices were good and prosperity was general, and after the war there was a great boom. The population grew to an all-time peak in 1922. The average daily attendance in the several elementary schools shot from 700 to 1,250 during the 4 years 1918-22. It was during this postwar period, when the price of raisins was good, that the townspeople thought that their community would develop into a major urban center. The farmers overexpanded on the basis of these prices, the city made elaborate improvements which eventually created burdensome assessments on real estate but which had the immediate effect during the construction period of furthering the inflationary economy.

At this time the town had a professional baseball team and a well-paid full-time chamber of commerce secretary. The community had enjoyed high prices and exuberant prosperity, and the people acted as if it were a permanent expectation.

In 1922 the situation changed; many small fortunes and many small savings were lost. The farmers who had mortgaged their home farms for an extra piece of land often lost both; people who had built homes in town had to pay high construction costs and higher tax assessments for paving, lighting, and the civic improvements. The population declined rapidly, so that the average daily attendance at the schools was reduced from the 1922 peak of 1,250 back to 1,000 in 1926, and it remained under 1,100 for the next 10 years. During this period both banks closed and were taken over by chain systems, and the financial position of the community was very low. Dinuba was then "the best-lighted cemetery ever seen," according to drummers.

In 1937 the town reorganized its finances, and economic conditions are much improved. At present, the high prices have brought on another boom period, but the chastened community, like the chastened farmer, has carefully avoided overexpansion, but is preparing for post-war improvements on a modest scale. Though it was not without individual heartaches and losses, the community has come through the war and depression in good order and now has many civic advantages and practically no debt.

The land of Dinuba was owned in large tracts prior to irrigation development, but the owners, over a period of years, sold off their