

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The differences between Arvin and Dinuba strike the casual observer immediately, for their appearance is demonstrative of divergent social characteristics. Driving into Dinuba from any direction one approaches the business section of the town by going through tree-lined streets flanked by rows of substantial dwellings. The business section of town is made up of brick buildings, many two stories high, and gives the appearance of stability and prosperity. The streets are wide and well paved, both in the business and residential sections. Approaching Arvin from either direction, one moves from the open country immediately into the small business section. The main street is lined with low stucco buildings and service stations for a distance of about two blocks. The side streets are entirely unpaved; there are no sidewalks, and the houses are crowded so close together that in some sections of town half of them front on the alleys. One single street for a distance of about two blocks is lined with houses where lawns have been planted (see figs. 12 and 13).

GOVERNMENT

Dinuba is an incorporated community and has a local government; Arvin is governed by the county. Incorporation is a matter of local action, and affects the life of the community in many ways. Incorporation and the quality of community government are important to this analysis not only because they affect the lives of the citizens, but because they are indicative of the spirit and motivation of the community.

The fact that Arvin has never constituted itself a civic body undoubtedly finds its root cause in the lack of any real civic unity. This lack of unity, which in essence makes two communities out of Arvin (one of farmers and one of laborers) will be analyzed later. Some Arvin residents find the reason for failure to incorporate in this fact alone, such as a minister who said that property owners do not want incorporation because they fear that the laborers would then "run the town." This is certainly not the only cause.

It should be pointed out that many California towns remain unincorporated, and this is particularly true of the towns in Kern County. Kern is a wealthy county and it has a strong and effective county government capable of furnishing services to the local communities. Each town has a fire department with adequate and modern equipment; each of the townships has a deputy sheriff, who is also adequately equipped. The county has a planning board which is at the service of local groups in unincorporated communities. For instance, Arvin has been furnished with modern stucco buildings (an attractive type of architecture admirably adapted to the desert climate) for its