

Kings County

The old Kings County Courthouse in Hanford.
Part 1 of 2: Hanford, Corcoran, Lemoore.



Kings County

Kings County Data

Population: 129,461 (Rank: 32)

Land Area (square miles): 1,391 (Rank: 34)

Kings County was created in 1893 by cutting off a part of Tulare County. It was named for the Kings River. The Kings River was discovered and named by the Moraga expedition of 1806 and was named the River of the Holy Kings. The Kings River spreads out into many small channels in the county.

The county is mostly flat and stretches from Highway 99 to the coastal ranges. It is the 12th ranked county in the state in farm income. The major products are milk, cotton, cattle, hay and alfalfa. The southwest part of the county is the Tulare Lake Bed. The Kings, Kaweah and Tule Rivers once drained into the lake. Today it is mostly dry and used for farming because the rivers are diverted to farm use.

The most famous incident to take place in the county happened before it became a county. Just to the east of Hanford is Grangeville. This is near the location of the Mussel Slough massacre which formed the basis of Frank Norris' novel *The Octopus*.

The Southern Pacific built a railroad from Goshen to Coalinga. The railroad received from the federal government every odd-numbered section of land for 20 miles on each side of the track. The railroad advertised these sections of land for sale at \$2.50 to \$5 an acre. The railroad could not legally sell the land until the railroad was built and the government gave them title. However the railroad went ahead and settlers took

advantage of the offer and developed farms.

When the railroad was built and the company received its titles they insisted that the settlers pay \$30 an acre. The farmers couldn't afford that price and formed a Settlers League to challenge the railroad in court. The railroad moved to evict some of the farmers. On May 11, 1880, U.S. Marshall Alonzo Poole tried to evict Henry Brewer. The farmers met the marshal and a shootout took place at Mussel Slough. Five settlers and two law officials were killed. Seven settlers were arrested and sentenced to one year in jail. As a result the Southern Pacific became hated throughout the state.

Cities: Hanford, Corcoran, Lemoore, Avenal. Towns: Stratford, Kettleman City,

Hanford

Hanford has a population of 55,000. It is named after a Southern Pacific railroad executive. It is famed for its quaint square. (October 2003)



Hanford

(October 2003)



Hanford

The Fox Theatre was built in 1929. (October 2003)



Hanford

(October 2003)



Hanford

(October 2003)



Hanford

The Bastille is located behind the courthouse on the town square. It was the county jail built in 1898.



Hanford

The old courthouse from the north. (October 2003)



Hanford

(October 2003)



Hanford

(November 2009)



Hanford

This is probably the only town square that has carousel.



Hanford

(November 2009)



Hanford

(November 2009)



Hanford

(November 2009)



Hanford

(November 2009)



Hanford

The stain glass window in the old courthouse which is now a bar.



Hanford

Hanford was a “dry town” long before Prohibition in
(November 2009)
1920.



Hanford

(November 2009)



Corcoran

The prison at Corcoran has a reputation for the mistreatment of prisoners. It is one of several prisons located in the San Joaquin Valley. There are actually two prisons here with a total of 13,000 prisoners. (October 2003)



Corcoran

Corcoran is the headquarters of the J.G. Boswell farm company. It is the largest cotton grower in the country. (October 2003)



Corcoran

Cotton is now packed in these giant bales. (October 2003)



Corcoran

Boswell built his farm into an empire of 132,000 acres. Boswell died in 1952. The farm is still run by his descendants. Mark Arax' book, *King of California*, is a fascinating look at agricultural politics and the Boswell family. (October 2003)



Corcoran

The white stuff along the road is cotton. (October 2003)





Corcoran

(October 2003)



Corcoran

(October 2003)



Corcoran

(October 2003)





Corcoran

(October 2003)



Corcoran

(October 2003)



Corcoran

The city's population is 25,000. The city became incorporated in 1914. The first post office was built in 1901. (October 2003)



Corcoran

(October 2003)



Corcoran

(October 2003)





Lemoore

We took these shots on a Sunday afternoon. There was no one downtown. (October 2003)



Lemoore

There is a naval air base located next to the town that contributes a lot to the town's economy. Planes from the carriers that dock in San Diego store their planes here. (October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

The population today is about 25,000. The first post office was built in 1875. (October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

(October 2003)



Lemoore

Another Sunday with very few people downtown. (November 2009)



Lemoore

(November 2009)



Lemoore

(November 2009)



Lemoore

(November 2009)



Lemoore

(November 2009)

