

San Joaquin County

The San Joaquin County Courthouse in
Stockton.
Part 1 of 5: Delta



San Joaquin County

San Joaquin County Data

Population: 563,598 (Rank: 15)

Land Area (square miles): 1,399 (Rank: 33)

San Joaquin County is different from other valley counties because the western half is part of the San Joaquin Delta and there is a deepwater channel that brings ocean-going ships to Stockton in the middle of the county.

The county has several rivers that flow from the foothills to form the Delta. The Cosumnes River forms the northern border of the county. The Mokelumne River flows through Lodi and the Calaveras through Stockton. The southern border of the county is formed by the Stanislaus River. These rivers and the main San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers form the 1,000 miles of waterways that shape the Delta.

The county's history and particularly the history of Stockton is shaped by four events—the Gold Rush, the development of grain farming, the reclamation of the Delta and finally the development of irrigated vegetable, fruit and nut crops.

The original settlers were brought to the county by Captain Weber, a German immigrant, who obtained a Mexican land grant. Weber, with great visions of the future, laid out an impressive town at the end of a channel on the San Joaquin River that provided access to San Francisco. At the beginning Weber had trouble attracting settlers but the Gold Rush of 1849 soon led people to Stockton. It was the closest they could get by water to the southern gold fields around Sonora. Farming soon followed.

By the 1870's wheat growing began to develop and Stockton became a shipping point for wheat. It also became a manufacturing center for grain harvesters, steam tractors, wagons and ships that operated on the Delta waterways.

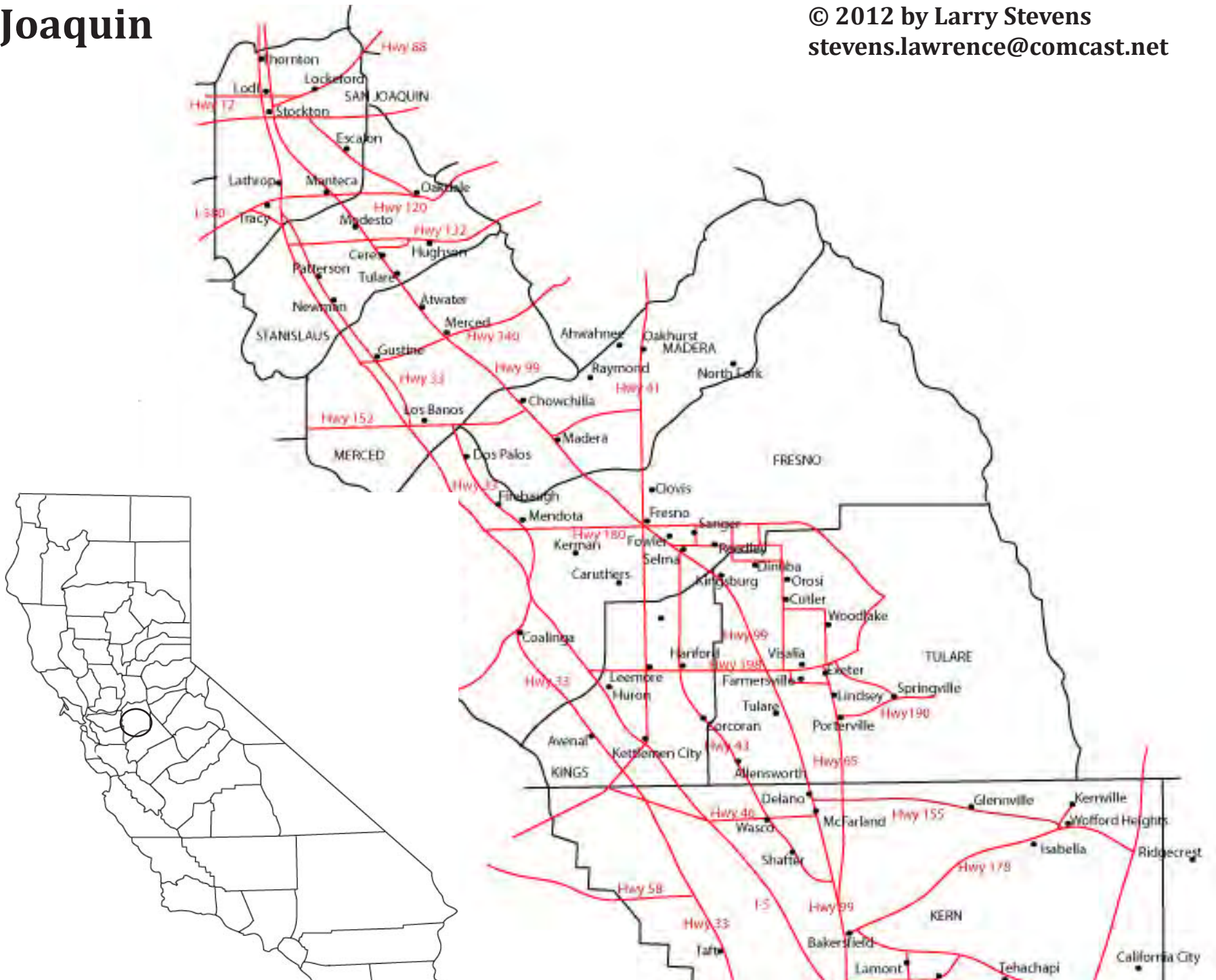
In the 1880's most of the trees in the Delta had been cut down for firewood for the paddlewheel steamers, and levees were constructed to turn the Delta into farmland. The Delta is made of rich peat soil. Highways 4 and 12 cut through the Delta.

I-5 and Highway 99 that cut through the middle of the county along with railroads and an airport make this area a transportation hub. The county extends only into the lower foothills of the Sierras.

Cities: Stockton, Lodi, Ripon, Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Escalon. Towns: Terminous, Lockeford, Linden, Thornton.

San Joaquin

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Railroad Bridge

The Delta has about 1,000 miles of waterways and is vital water transfer point in the state. There is a debate about building tunnels or canals to transfer more water across the Delta to Southern California. (September 2009)



Potato Slough

The faint white lines in the picture are flocks of geese. (January 2006)



East Bay Aqueduct

*These pipes carry water from the Mokelumne River to Oakland and the East Bay.
(September 2009)*



Eight Mile Road

(January 2006)



Eight Mile Road

(January 2006)



Cormorants

Cormorants are the black birds sitting on the higher branches of the trees. (September 2009)



Mt. Diablo

Mt. Diablo at about 4,000 feet hovers over the Delta.
(September 2009)



Bacon Island Ferry

There are few ferries left in the Delta. I can think of three of them. (September 2009)



Bacon Island Ferry

(September 2009)



Mt. Diablo

(January 2006)



Bass Boat on Whiskey Slough



Fishing on Whiskey Slough

(September 2009)



Eight Mile Road

(January 2006)



Eight Mile Road

(January 2006)



Delta

(September 2009)



Venice Island Ferry

(January 2006)



Jones Tract



Potato Sough

(January 2006)



Marina



Corn

(January 2006)



Venice Island Ferry

The sand bags are there because of some flooding. (January 2006)



Tomato Harvest

(August 2008)



Garbage

Unfortunately some use the Delta as a garbage dump.
(January 2006)



Jones Tract

(August 2003)



Tomato field-Jones Tract

(August 2008)



East Bay Municipal Utility District Aqueduct

The green plant is water hyacinth, an invasive species. (August 2008)



Tomato Harvest

(August 2008)



A Delta Slough

Dead water hyacinth. The plant is semi-tropical and dies off during the winter. (January 2006)



Highway 12

(January 2006)



Deep Water Channel

The Stockton Deep Water Channel allows ocean-going ships to travel from San Francisco Bay to Stockton. The San Joaquin River has been deepened over a distance of 41 miles. (January 2006)



Brannan Island Road

(January 2006)



A Delta Slough

(January 2006)



Brannan Island Road

Delta islands are prone to flooding. These houses are built for the event. (January 2006)



Brannan Island Road

(January 2006)



Roberts Island

(August 2008)



Tracy Boulevard

(August 2008)



Roberts Island

A spray rig designed to pump poisons on the crops. (August 2008)



Union Island

(August 2008)



Highway 4

The bridge dates back to 1914. It pivots to allow boats to sail through. A bridge tender sits in the little house above the bridge. (January 2001)



(January 2001)



Highway 4

Historic bridges on Highway 4. (January 2001)



Jones Tract

Millions of birds winter in the Delta. (December 2009)



Mt. Diablo

Mt. Diablo covered with a rare snow. (December 2009)



Asparagus

Asparagus grows underneath the ground and is cut off when it emerges as a spear. The soft peat soil of the Delta is perfect for asparagus. (March 2009)



Asparagus

(March 2009)



Highway 4

(August 2009)



Union Island

(August 2009)



Jones Tract

(August 2009)



Windmill Cove

This is one of several marinas that dot the Delta. This has an anchorage for houseboats. (August 2009)



Windmill Cove

(August 2009)



Holt Road

(August 2009)



Whiskey Slough

(August 2009)



Pumping Plants



Perhaps the most important spot in California. This is where water is pumped to Southern California and two thirds (24 million) of its population. The largest water conveyance system in the world. (August 2009)

Pumping Plants



Pumping Plants

The Central Valley Project turned the Central Valley into a major world agricultural area. (August 2009)

