

Mr. Nicholas Carriger built the first redwood house, about one-half mile from the town; he was the first American who planted a vineyard, and still resides there. Sonoma is situated in Sonoma Valley, one of the most beautiful valleys of the world, which we shall fully describe. The town has, in its center, a large square, around which the business portion of it is built. There are two hotels, a number of stores, several saloons and a number of shops. The trades and professions are well represented. The population numbers 367; 209 males and 158 females. Sonoma has two churches, one school, societies of Odd Fellows, Masons, Grangers and different other denominations. The streets are wide and kept in good repair. Water works are now in course of construction, but the town is not sufficiently large to support gas works. The houses, especially the residences, are built far apart, so that the town proper covers a very large space, and from a distant view, would lead one to suppose that it contains a much greater population than what it really has. We paid a visit to the old barracks, now transformed into wine cellars, the old mission now used as a church; and also saw the ruins of numerous, adobe buildings which were built years ago and served as dwellings for the first inhabitants of the locality.

Four miles south of Sonoma, on Sonoma Creek, is the embarcadero or shipping point, called St. Louis. The creek is of sufficient depth for small schooners, and from here the products of Sonoma Valley are shipped to San Francisco. At St. Louis there are about fifteen buildings, comprising a storehouse, one warehouse, and a number of dwellings. The land between Sonoma and St. Louis is partly covered with small vineyards, the last end of the road leads through tules, or swamp-lands, not yet reclaimed. About one and a half miles south-east of Sonoma are the vineyards of The Buena Vista Vinicultural Association, Major Snyder and Henry Winkle, which are among the largest wineries in the State. We have not sufficient time to give these localities more than a passing notice, as we are desirous of going on our tour up the valley, toward Santa Rosa.

We also paid a short visit to the Polpula Rancho, the property of Mr. Julius Poppe, situated about six miles south of Sonoma. Here we were shown several fish ponds, containing carps imported by Mr. Poppe from Germany. The carp is not found in American waters; in Europe it is considered the finest fresh water fish, and to Mr. Poppe belongs the credit of being the first to supply California with this delicacy. Mr. Poppe went to Germany expressly for the purpose, and procured 83 carps, he placed them in a tin tank and sailed from Hamburg by steamer for New York. He lost all but eight of them prior to reaching New York, and arrived at Sonoma with five fish alive, but in a very precarious condition. Immediately upon arrival he placed them in one of the ponds, and he has now several hundred. This fact shows that the water and climate of California are well suited to the propagation of the carp, and we hope that in a few years this excellent fish will be seen in the markets of San Francisco.

At the hotel in Sonoma we made the acquaintance of a gentleman living in the neighborhood of Santa Rosa, who politely invited us to take seats in his buggy and accompany him. We gladly accepted his offer, the more so as the communication between Sonoma and Santa Rosa is by stage, and we not having provided ourselves with a team as yet.

Leaving Sonoma at 7 A.M. we follow the road in a north-westerly direction and are soon in the beautiful valley. On all sides are elegant residences, surrounded by shade trees, fruit trees, vines and flower gardens. The road runs on the east side of Sonoma Creek, a stream which rises in the mountains of the upper end of the County and empties into San Pablo Bay at St. Louis. Among the many attractive dwellings, we notice on the west side of the Creek those of Col. Rogers, Solomon Carriger, Caleb C. Carriger, Nicholas Carriger, A. Lamotte and William McP. Hill. They all have large vineyards, fruit orchards and flower gardens; their places are kept in excellent order, and are among the most beautiful we have seen in our travels. Here we see growing side by side in the open air, oranges, apples, almonds, plums, figs, cherries, and other tropical and semi-tropical fruits, as well as those raised in northern latitudes. The vineyards contain almost every quality of grapes, from the finest imported to the more common Mission variety. We were invited to visit the property of Mr. Nicholas Carriger, and shown all over the premises. We inspected his four extensive wine cellars, also the winery and distillery, and found his wines and brandy to be of excellent quality. His residence, which is the first frame house built in the valley, is still in excellent repair, and contains a number of fine rooms very comfortably arranged. On the east side of the Creek are also a number of handsome-looking cottages and houses, all nestled among trees and shrubbery, and surrounded by vineyards and fruit orchards.

We now continue along the creek for about seven miles; then crossing it, reach the Half-way House, eight miles from Sonoma. We could not understand why this is called the "Half-way House," it being only eight miles from Sonoma and fourteen miles from Santa Rosa. The proprietor of the establishment could give us no satisfactory reason and we are still in ignorance. From here we continue in the same direction and pass Glenellen, a two house town, where the postoffice and the necessary saloon are under the same roof with a shoemaker shop (doing a good business?) next door; a little further on we pass more vineyards, more vineyards, and vineyards again, having seen but very few grain fields since leaving Sonoma, and come to the farm of William Hood, called the Los Guilicos Rancho, about five miles from