Steel, Concrete, Brick and Golden Dollars Are Building Greater El Paso

Almost beyond comprehension are the building operations in the business section of El Paso during the last year. As if by magic, sky-piercing structures have sprung up and today continue to do so with still greater rapid progress, if anything, while plans for divers other modern buildings give impetus to the situation and the promise of placing El Paso at the head of the procession toward civic improvements, with a long and encouraging lead. A brief history of El Paso county and the Rio Grande Valley, taken from the El Paso Chamber of Commerce Book, "The Story of a City."

EL PASO COUNTY.

The estimated population of El Paso county is 60,000, but notwithstanding the fact that it is so sparsely settled, it has the distinction of being the largest county in the state of Texas and contains 5,414,400 acres, of which some 25,000 acres are under cultivation and 150,000 acres will eventually be reclaimed through irrigation, as the land is admirably adapted to this work. The other land is valuable for grazing and stock raising.

The tax assessment total has more than doubled in the past three years, the amounts being $16,763,341 in 1905, and $33,766,171 in 1908. During this period four thousand people have purchased land in the county with a view to improving same and becoming permanent residents.

There are 378 miles of completed railroad and twenty-five miles of sidings, so that El Paso County is amply furnished with transportation facilities, and the enormous crops of alfalfa and other products are quickly and easily handled.

THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY.

The Rio Grande Valley is in many respects the most remarkable valley on the American continent. It is completely walled in by mountain ranges on both the American and Mexican sides, and enjoys a climate that from a planter's point of view is absolutely perfect. The soil is so rich in natural fertilizer or silt supplied through the waters of the Rio Grande that the experts of the Government service have pronounced its growing qualities to be probably equaled, but assuredly not surpassed by the valley of the Nile. There are 200,000 acres of wonderfully rich soil, whose growing qualities have already been tested and proven to be adapted to an even greater variety of grains, vegetables and fruit than the much advertised valleys of the extreme West.

The greatest area of land under cultivation at present lies between El Paso and Las Cruces, New Mexico, a distance of forty-three miles to the north, and running south to Fabens, Texas, some twenty-nine miles to the south and east. In this enormous tract we find successful ranches of every type. The crop tonnage per acre in the Rio Grande Valley is unsurpassed in the world.

WHAT THE SOIL WILL DO.

With the semi-tropic climate and the rich soil of the Rio Grande Valley, large profits can be made growing all kinds of garden truck. El Paso and the surrounding mining towns consume all that is produced at the present time. The Northern, Eastern and Southern cities furnish a market for early vegetables and for fruits and alfalfa.

Plant Food In Sediment.

Rio Grande—Phosphoric acid, 0.14 percent; potash, 1.21 percent; nitrogen, 0.13 percent.

Nile—Phosphoric acid, 0.21 percent; potash, 0.68 percent; nitrogen, 0.12 percent.

The Valley is especially adapted to the growing of perfect fruit. The pears and grapes being famous and much sought after in Northern and Eastern markets.

A tabulated list of the average value of crops in this district is necessarily vague, as the modern methods employed by the American rancher of the Southwest result in the actual harvesting of two and in some cases three crops of a variety of products grown consecutively on the same acreage. As an example, from forty to seventy bushels of winter wheat to an acre has been harvested on a well irrigated tract, and a second crop of beans yielding 2,000 pounds to an acre, taken from the same ground during the same season. With wheat selling at $1.00 a bushel and beans at 3 1-2 cents a pound, the net results seem quite impossible to the Eastern farmer. From four to five cuttings of alfalfa are made annually. A perfect stand produces one and one-half tons to an acre per cutting. Such results show us that one hundred acres of well cultivated and properly irrigated Rio Grande Valley land will produce as great results as one thousand acres of ordinary farming property.

Following is a table compiled from actual results, showing the annual value of the variety of crops raised within twenty miles of the city of El Paso, the wide range of the amounts produced per acre being due to the rancher's knowledge of modern irrigation methods more largely than from any actual difference in the soil tilled:

Yield per Acre.	Value per Acre.
Alfalfa, 5 to 8 tons	$ 60 to $100
Wheat, 30 to 70 bushels	30 to 70
Oats, 60 to 70 bushels	25 to 28
Barley, 80 to 100 bushels	100 to 125
Rye, 25 to 30 bushels	30 to 50
Corn, 30 to 40 bushels	50 to 60
Asparagus, 12,000 lbs	750 to 1000
Beans, 4000 lbs	450 to 750
Cabbage	400 to 500
Onions, 10 tons	250 to 500
Sweet Potatoes	150 to 200
Tomatoes	75
Chili	150
Pears	450 to 750
Apples, 14,000 lbs	150 to 300
Peaches, 145 trees, 3 years old	450 to 600
Plums	350 to 500
Grapes, 14,000 lbs	300 to 400
Cantaloupes, 19,000	350 to 500
Berries	500 to 800
Honey, 20 to 50 hives	100 to 300

Two crops that have been given very little attention up to the present time are apples and sugar beets. The beets raised in the valley contain an unusually high percentage of sugar, and a sugar refinery would no doubt prove profitable in this locality. As the rainfall is very slight in the irrigated districts, the farmer is practically master of the situation, and a crop of beets rich in sugar contents is the rule rather than the exception. The control of the water supply makes certain what would otherwise be in doubt. It assures the harvest.

As an actual example of the results to be obtained within a few hours' ride of El Paso, the following report was received, dated July, 1909, from the Lucerne Farm Company, Berino, New Mexico:

"Last February, Viljoen brothers, after properly preparing thirty-five acres of land, seeded it to alfalfa, and supplemented 800 pounds of wheat seed as a nurse crop. When the wheat was several feet high and about ready to cut for fodder in the usual way, it appeared such a splendid stand that it was determined to let the same ripen. About the first week in July, the crop was harvested, and the threshing of the wheat completed later. The result was 62,372 pounds of fine wheat, and the straw being well mixed with alfalfa was baled and sold at $8.00 per ton f. o. b. Berino, there being upward of 35 tons. The wheat was sold to Mr. Chas. Miller, of Anthony, N. M., at $1.56½ per hundred pounds. The thirty-five acres was, of course, irrigated right away again, and was soon covered with a beautiful stand of alfalfa seven inches high, which yielded three good cuttings of alfalfa the same season."

GOVERNMENT IRRIGATION.

The Southwest is a big country, where they do big things, and the Elephant Butte dam, located in the Rio Grande Valley, is no exception to this rule, being the most enormous undertaking of this nature within the memory of mankind. To say that the United States Government is actively engaged at the present time in the preliminary work on what will be the greatest dam on earth, creating the largest artificial lake in the world and the most extensive irrigation system of modern times, is to state the simple fact.

A complete explanation of what this will mean to the city of El Paso and the surrounding country would require a special volume. No part of North America produces such an abundance nor so great a variety of crops as are made possible when the arid lands of the Southwest are properly irrigated. This is partly due to the great percentage of nitrogen found in the soil and the fact that this region enjoys an average of 330 days of sunshine each year. Couple these conditions with the rancher's ability to absolutely control the water supply and you make certain what would otherwise be in doubt. You are absolutely assured a successful harvest. A crop failure is as rare as a killing frost in the tropics.

The Elephant Butte dam is located twelve miles southwest of Engle, N. Mex., or about 100 miles north of the city of El Paso. Advantage has been taken of the natural formation occurring in the valley at this point, which creates a natural wall from which the dam extends across the river bed. The cost of the completed work will be $8,200,000.00, and some idea of the magnitude of the work may be obtained from the following figures: The engineers will go sixty-five feet below the bed of the river in order to reach solid rock for their foundation. The dam will be 180 feet thick at bed rock and 450 feet long. If all the cement required to construct this huge dam were delivered in one shipment, it would require a freight train fifteen miles long with every car packed to its full capacity.

An amount of water equal to that found in the Hudson river from Albany to Manhattan Island would have about the same covering power as the quantity which will be held in reserve in Lake Hall.

The crest or top of the dam will be twenty feet wide and 1400 feet long; its extreme height being 275 feet. Concrete, rock and huge iron bars will be used in its construction. One hundred and seventy-five feet above the river, or twenty feet below the crest of the dam, spillways will be built to carry off all excess of water after the reservoir proper is full. The storage of water will reach 102,306,000,000 cubic feet or 767,745,000,000 gallons. Lake B. M. Hall, which is the name given this huge reservoir, is to be thirty-four miles long and will average 2 1-2 miles wide. To reduce these figures to a practical basis, the Elephant Butte dam will, when complete, reserve a body of water capable of covering 2,350,000 acres of land to the depth of one foot ,enough to satisfactorily irrigate the entire Rio Grande Valley for a distance of 170 miles during a period of three years.

DRY FARMING.

Dry farming in the vicinity of El Paso is in its infancy. The few tests made have proven most satisfactory and profitable.

The Department of Agriculture has been studying the soils and crops suitable for these regions, which will result in great value to agriculture and horticulture.

To persons looking for investments in low priced land there are great opportunities on the mesas or second bottom lands adjoining the valley on either side back for a distance of a few miles. When the science of dry farming is applied to this land it will be as productive as dry farming land in any section of the country. This mesa land, however, will probably be irrigated as soon as the big Elephant Butte dam project is completed and the electric power proposition developed. It is the intention of the reclamation service to furnish electricity for pumping water to these mesa lands, at a small cost. The soil on the mesa is fine, and will grow almost anything, particularly is it well adapted for orchard and vineyards. There are many thousands of acres of this mesa land which will probably be irrigated within a few years. In the meantime with the methods of dry farming applied to them they will net the farmer big profits. No other dry farming section in the entire Southwest today offers the prospects that the mesa or second bottom lands adjoining the Rio Grande Valley do.

It is but natural that ranch property should be extremely active when such a gigantic enterprise has been guaranteed by the Government.

LAND VALUES.

Land values in the Rio Grande Valley are very low at the present time and there are worlds of opportunities for anyone now to get a small or large tract of land. It is true the land is not as cheap per acre as land in the dry farming districts or in places where irrigation is uncertain. Five years ago and even three years ago, before the Elephant Butte dam project was a certainty or even a possibility, valley lands could be bought as low as five dollars per acre. During the past year, since the big project became a certainty, and when the engineers actually began work, land prices have gone up very fast. This five-dollar-an-acre land is now selling for $30.00, and as high as $100.00 per acre. Cleared lands, in cultivatoin, in alfalfa, orchards, vineyards, with houses, barns, etc., are as high as $300.00 per acre, and yet it is low. In the El Paso Valley land is not quite so high. Good land can be bought low in proportion to its producing capacity. Orchards in Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and in the rich valleys of California, are selling as high as $2,500.00 to $5,000.00 per acre, and yet these orchards will not produce as much as Rio Grande Valley orchards, the fruit is not so certain, the quailty not so good and the freight rates to the Eastern markets much higher. Besides this, the climate in the Rio Grande Valley is more delightful than the climate of these other valleys.

General Information About El Paso Valley by Writing to any of the Following:

ANDERSON-FILLER REALTY CO., 27-28 Bassett-Edwards Block, El Paso, Texas.
J. R. FISK, Trust Bldg., El Paso, Texas.
H. L. HOWELL, Herald Building, El Paso, Texas.
LATTA & HAPPER, 207 Mesa Ave., El Paso, Texas.
R. C. BAILEY LAND CO., Orndorff Bldg., 306 Mesa Ave.,
LOOMIS BROS., 202 Texas St., El Paso, Texas.
LONE STAR LAND CO., 213 Texas St., El Paso, Texas.
MAPLE & CO., 209½ Mesa Ave., El Paso, Texas.
D. G. HEINEMAN, 207 Mills St., El Paso, Texas.
JOSEPHUS BOGGS, 15 Morgan Buldg., El Paso, Texas.
BUCHOZ & SCHUSTER, Caples Bldg., El Paso, Texas.
CASSIDY & DAVIDSON, 211 Mills St., El Paso, Texas.
A. P. COLES & BROS., 204 N. Oregon St., El Paso, Texas.
NEWMAN INVESTMENT CO., 226 Mesa Ave., El Paso, Texas.
PETERMAN & LANSDEN REALTY CO., Ysleta, Texas.
WM. MOELLER, Herald Bldg., El Paso, Texas.
MATHEWS & DYER, 117 N. Stanton St., El Paso, Texas.
AUSTIN & MARR, Caples Bldg., El Paso, Texas.
HATTON REALTY CO., City Nat'l. Bank Building, El Paso, Texas.
PENCE BROS., 217 Texas St., El Paso, Texas.
FELIX MARTINEZ, 14 Plaza Block, El Paso, Texas.