

S. H. Fountain Was Large Landholder

Born in Van Buren County, Iowa, January 6, 1849, S. H. Fountain was taken at the age of five years to the northeastern part of Missouri, where the family bought unimproved land at \$2.50 per acre. The father died there in 1863 and ten years later the son, who in the meantime, had remained with his widowed mother, left home for the west, coming to California on the railroad which had been completed a few years before. Five months were spent in Sacramento and he then came to Solano County where with the exception of four years in Sonoma County he resided at Dixon. He married Miss Carrie Ellis, daughter of James and Henrietta (Johnson) Ellis, natives of Canton, Missouri, but residents of California after 1865, having crossed the plains with wagon and mule team.

There were five children in the family of Mr. and Mrs. Fountain, namely: Ellis W., who was a graduate civil engineer, who assisted his father, Beryl; S. Harold, who attended the U. of Calif.; Helene, who studied music, and Charles Earle. Ellis W. was a leading worker in the Masonic Lodge in Dixon and took a warm interest in politics as a Democrat but never cared for official honors.

With the saving of his years as a wage earner, Mr. Fountain in 1880 invested in land in

Solano County, buying 160 acres and later adding to the same. Later he bought another quarter section of land, for which he paid \$11,000, and on this he raised such large crops of wheat that in two years he had the land paid for. Later, he bought a third quarter and afterwards added another 160 acres. He also cultivated a large tract of leased land. For the season of 1911 he had 720 acres in barley and eight acres in wheat. Twenty sacks per acre of barley were harvested in 1910, but the usual average was 15 sacks. Forty acres were in alfalfa, from which as many as five crops had been cut in one year, the yield being increased by the admirable facilities for irrigation afforded by the pumping plant. The home farm had abundant representation in nuts and fruit, there being one hundred acres in almonds and twelve in bartlett pears of a very superior quality. In 1908 the almond crop amounted to seventy five tons, but during the two years following the yield was fifty tons. That was considered a fair average. In 1910 the yield of pears was light, but some seasons the returns were so large as to represent an unusually large interest on the investment.

One of the chief beauties of the home farm was the convenient and artistic residence, which with its 12 large rooms and its well kept yards and attractive surroundings, were a credit to any community. The other buildings were well adapted to their intended use. Twenty-five head of mules and colts were kept on the farm, twenty head of work horses, thirty head of cows and young cattle, a small number of hogs and one hundred and fifty head of thoroughbred shropshire ewes. From his sheep he derived an annual income of about \$1000. Only the very best were kept and he had for sale 100 head of young shropshire rams, some of which had no superior among the purebred sheep throughout the nation.

In addition to his large force of work horses and mules, he owned a gasoline traction engine of 45 horse power, which he used for plowing and other heavy work.

Politically, Mr. Fountain was a Democrat, and for several years served as school trustee and acted as clerk of the board. It had been his aim, not only to see that the children in his family were thoroughly educated, but also to see that the other children of the community had all the opportunities they desired or merited. With his family he held membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church South at Berkeley, having identified himself with that congregation when he made his home in that city for the purpose of educating his children.