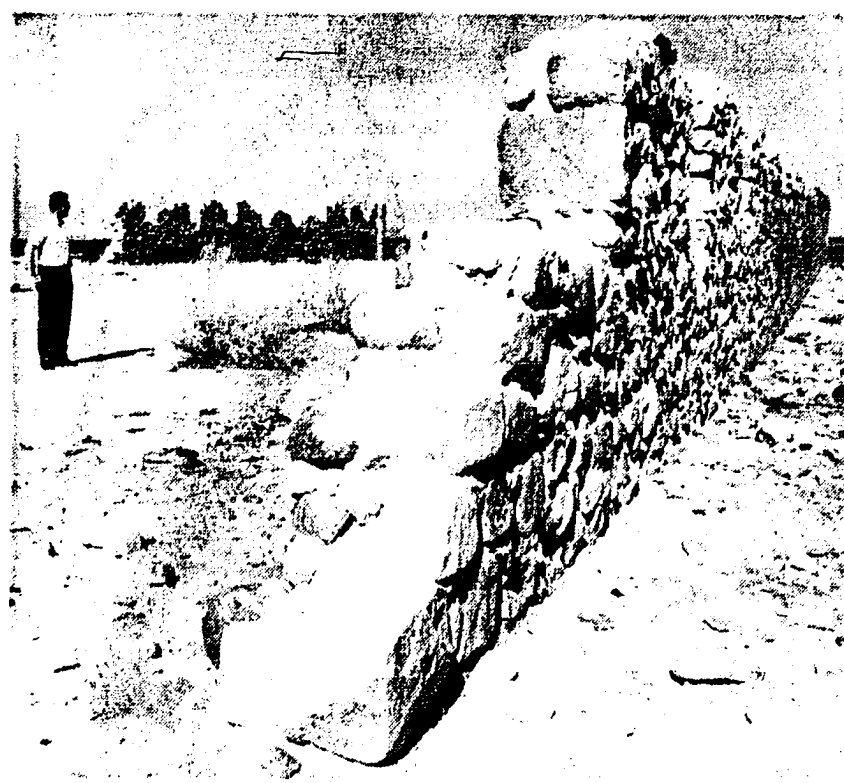


North County Envisioned as 'Connecticut of Southland'



REMAINS OF 'UTOPIA'—Visitor surveys shell of former Socialist colony at Llano. About 1,000 persons occupied the "utopian" colony from 1914 to 1918.

Times photo

Freeway Opening Holds Key

Los Angeles County, seemingly running out of room for expansion, still has nearly 1,000 square miles—one fourth of its area—standing idle, yet to be developed. This is the second in a series of articles describing the county's vast northern plain.

BY CHARLES HILLINGER
Times Staff Representative

LLANO — "Look at the idle land . . . Joshua trees and cactus stubble as far as you can see. Imagine what it will be like 25 years from now . . . dotted with homes, retail shopping centers. Its destiny — the Connecticut of Southern California."

C. V. Paul, 69, a man of vision who made millions irrigating California agriculture, talked about the immense sweep of land he surveyed from the patio of Crystallaire Country Club.

Below lay the great plain that is the northern quarter of Los Angeles County.

"New Yorkers commute to Connecticut. That's the way it will be here in a few years . . . thousands commuting on rapid transit and fast freeway from offices in Los Angeles to homes in North County communities," Paul declared.

Faith in Future

Paul has faith in the future of Llano and all North County. He has spent a large part of his fortune converting desert wasteland into Antelope Valley's newest golf course. He purchased 3,600 acres surrounding the lush fairways and greens.

Llano—Spanish for plain, pronounced lyano—died in 1918.

It has lain dormant ever since . . . a ghost town on Highway 138, 20 miles east of Palmdale.

Paul has been breathing life back into the former Socialist utopian colony since 1949.

Once Socialist Colony

From 1914 to 1918 Llano was a communal home for more than 1,000 Socialists. Job Harriman, Los Angeles attorney and Socialist candidate for mayor shortly after the turn of the century, founded the colony.

He and his followers, all searching for a better life, constructed homes, a hotel, a meeting house of native stone. They had silos for their grain, a network of irrigation pipes. They worked for the common good, with common wages . . . a promise of sharing in the fruits of the common effort.

There wasn't enough water. There were no profits. Instead dissension rent the community. It went the way of nearly all utopian ventures. It soon collapsed.

Shells of the Socialist

Please Turn to Pg. 6, Col. 1

PWS-0087-0001

North County Seen as Site of New Suburbia

Continued from First Page structure still stand dotting the lonely desert terrain that is Llano, dotting much of Paul's domain, yet-to-be-developed land surrounding lush fairways and greens of Crystalaire Country Club.

"North County's most valuable assets are its weather, the beauty of the land . . . its smog-free air," Paul said, adding: "Its day will come. It has to come. It's one of the last frontiers left in Southern California."

Wayne H. Garrett, 29, manager of the new Bank of America branch at Pearblossom, explained why the branch was established a year ago:

"The potential growth of this area is unbelievable. It's quiet up here now. There isn't any industry — YET. But there is great expectation that industry will come to Pearblossom and the entire northern plain."

Tomato Harvest

"Opening of the Antelope Valley Freeway in 1963 will be the ke y s t o n e of North County. We've had our problems, but I believe I will see the day when people will flock in here by the tens of thousands. It will be like opening flood gates behind water," J. F. Palmer, Littlerock farmer declared.

Palmer's 74, a young 74. Last year he introduced tomatoes to North County as a new agricultural item.

"The way I see it, any man who looks ahead a little ways and invests money up here will make a bundle," Palmer allowed.

Pearblossom and Littlerock have been the county's peach and pear producing center for nearly a century.

It is in this part of the northern plain that you hear the most talk about the proposed tunnel freeway route through the mountains.

Civic Center Tie

Designed by Southland engineer J. C. Ells, the 22.4 mile short cut would run from La Canada to Littlerock bringing Palmdale but 44 miles from the Los Angeles Civic Center instead of its present 70 miles.

Four miles from La Canada near Switzers Camp the first tunnel would be dug 4.5 miles through 5,558-ft. high Josephine Mountain, coming out in Mill Creek Canyon. It would be the longest highway tunnel in the United States.

The road would follow the narrow mountain canyon with two more tunnels, one 1.55-miles long, the other 2.75-miles long, near the road's northern terminus.

Toll Road Seen

"It seems fantastic, but there is serious talk about it up here. Organizations in Antelope Valley are really pushing it," commented Russell Niles, Antelope Valley Junior College counselor.

"The way North County residents see it the tunnel route would be a toll road. It would be like the Golden Gate Bridge . . . pay for itself in 10 years," Raymond C. Wiess, 65, Llano well driller observed.

On Sept. 12 the Board of Supervisors asked for federal aid to build the tunnel freeway as a means of quicker access to the northern plain, as a civil defense escape route and huge nuclear war shelter.

State Division of Highway officials, however, say the proposal is impractical . . . that it would be astronomical in cost, virtually impossible to construct.

Clifford L. Rawson, executive director of the Antelope Valley Progress Assn. the chief tub-thumping organization to get things rolling in North County, attributes the lack of industry in his area to taxes higher than in neighboring Kern County and to rigid smog control ordinances which Kern County does not have.

Kern Competition

"The Kern County line lies seven miles north of Lancaster. And just across the line are several new large industries including the \$4.5 million United Carbon plant, the \$15 million American Potash industrial center, the \$4 million Great Lakes Carbon factory and the \$3 million Texas Aluminum Co.

"North Los Angeles County is losing industry to Kern County because of higher taxes and the smog control restrictions," Rawson said, adding:

"We believe the Antelope Valley Freeway will bring industry, growth and prosperity to the northern plain.

We have the room for expansion that other areas lack. We have some of the least expensive land left in Southern California."

Farming Towns

The northern quarter of the county got its first real start with the completion in 1876 of the Southern Pacific Railroad from San Francisco to Los Angeles via Antelope Valley.

At first a number of ag-

ricultural colonies appeared on the scene, at Lancaster in 1884, Palmdale in 1886, Tierra Bonita and Redman in 1888, Llano in 1890 and Littlerock in 1892.

It remained an agricultural area until World War II when Edwards Air Force Base (then known as Muroc) doubled its population.

In 1940, 13,367 lived in the top quarter of the county; in 1950, 36,367, and today, 63,158.

The County Regional Planning Commission's general plan for the northern plain adopted this year anticipates a population of 750,000 in the area by 1980.

TUESDAY—The rural communities that dot the northern plain.