

HISTORY

OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

OF THE

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA.

An Historical Story of the State's Marvelous Growth from Its Earliest Settlement
to the Present Time

BY

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ALSO

Containing Biographies of Well-Known Citizens of the Past and Present.

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in the slate quarries in Fairhaven, Vt., until December of the following year, when he came to California. His first work in this state was at Penryn, Placer county, where he was apprenticed as a granite cutter. Three years later he began work at his trade in San Francisco, and in 1888 came to Tulare county, looking for a location which he soon found, then returned to San Francisco and interested Messrs. Hughes and Griffith in a quarry which they opened in the spring of 1889, near Exeter. After five years (during which time Mr. Hughes disposed of his interest to his partners), they bought ten acres of land and opened their present quarry, known as the Rocky Point Granite Works. They expect to have a spur of the proposed electric railway, leading from Visalia to Lemon Cove, run up to the quarry, when they can ship by car, and will also have their works operated by electricity. In addition to his interest in this business Mr. Owen also owns one hundred and six acres adjoining the Griffith property, on section 6, township 19, range 27, upon which he engages in stock-raising, while he also owns a fine pasture of forty acres near Farmersville and a farm of one hundred and sixty acres three miles southeast of Exeter, where he makes his home. He also owns a handsome residence in Exeter, and is interested in the People's Canal Ditch Company.

In Visalia Mr. Owen was united in marriage with Rose Ella Fly, who was born near Exeter, and they are the parents of five children, namely: Hugh, Leland, Oliver, Viola and Zylpha. Mr. Owen was made a Mason in Penryn and is now a member of Visalia Lodge No. 128, F. & A. M. He also belongs to the Knights of Pythias, of Exeter, of which he is past chancellor, and the Uniformed Rank, Knights of Pythias. Religiously his wife is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, while he is a Presbyterian. Politically he is a Republican.

FRED STURM. An upbuilder of this section and a successful orange grower, Fred Sturm is named among the representative men of this class. He was born in Illinois November 15, 1864, a son of John Sturm, a German emigrant whose biographical sketch appears elsewhere in this volume. He received his education in the common schools, after which he engaged as a painter and paper-hanger in Elgin, Ill. He became very successful in that line of work, taking big contracts and operating a large number of men in both city and country. Deciding to locate on the Pacific coast he came to California in 1896 and located on his present property, purchasing with his father two hundred acres at that time. They later added by purchase two

hundred acres more, the property having since been divided. In his home place Mr. Sturm has twenty-five acres devoted to the cultivation of oranges and lemons. He has recently purchased a tract of thirty acres just west of his home, and also has forty acres of salt grass west of Portersville, as well as owning town lots, an interest in the Rochdale store, and town lots in Elgin, Ill. With the Sturm Brothers Company he was interested in a tract of eighty acres south of Plano, forty acres being planted to oranges, while they also owned other tracts in this section. He has made a success of his work and has a fine orange orchard.

In Portersville Mr. Sturm was united in marriage with Carrie Adams, a native of Visalia, Cal., and they have two children, Esther and Edwin, both at home. Mr. Sturm is a member of the Evangelical Church, and politically is a staunch Republican.

CHARLES W. SCHANK. Prominent among the enterprising and successful business men of Newman is Charles W. Schank, a man of marked ability and genuine worth. He is actively identified with the mercantile and industrial interests of the place as a hardware merchant and a plumber, and is also well known throughout this section of the county as an undertaker. A son of Charles W. Schank, Sr., he was born April 16, 1859, in Louisville, Ky.

A farmer by birth and breeding, Charles W. Schank, Sr., was born in Vanderburg county, Ky., and for several years of his earlier life was a resident of Louisville, Ky. He subsequently settled in Evansville, Ind., where he resided until his death. His wife, whose maiden name was Martha Robinson, spent her entire life in Kentucky, dying there in early womanhood. She bore him five children, one son and four daughters, Charles W., the special subject of this sketch, being the fourth child in succession of birth.

Removing to Evansville, Ind., with his father when a lad of seven years, Charles W. Schank there received a practical common school education. Beginning to learn the tinner's trade when fifteen years old, he served a full apprenticeship, becoming an expert tinner. Migrating to St. Louis, Mo., in 1879, he followed his trade in that city for a year, and then went to Topeka, Kan., where he was similarly employed for two years. In 1882 Mr. Schank located as a tinner in Silver City, N. M., and the following year came to California, where he worked at his trade for a year, living first in Los Angeles, and then in San Francisco and San Jose. Turning his face eastward in 1884, he was for three years located in Central City, Colo., where he was

and took up a homestead claim three and one-half miles southeast of Dinuba, and from the wild plain and sheep pasture he improved a rich and valuable ranch. Erecting a dwelling house and farm buildings, he placed the land in a tillable condition, and was here profitably employed in wheat raising until his death, November 22, 1888. For twelve years after the death of her husband Mrs. Rice resided on the home farm, which has since been sold off in different lots, but since 1900 has resided in Dinuba. She is a woman of refinement and worth, and is highly esteemed and respected for her many virtues and sterling qualities. Of the union of Mr. and Mrs. Rice ten children were born, namely: John C., of Hanford; Mrs. Laura T. Edwards, of Arizona; Mrs. Melissa J. Lawrence, of Point Richmond; Mrs. Ella S. Bacon, of Tulare county; Thomas, of Arizona; Mrs. Mamie McCracken, of this county; Mrs. Jessie B. Ryce, of Selma; Charles G., in the ice business at Dinuba; Hattie B., wife of W. G. Hunter, of this county; and Frank E., of Dinuba. A strong Prohibitionist and an earnest worker in the temperance cause, Mrs. Rice is a valued member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She is also a faithful member of the Baptist Church, and is president of its Ladies' Aid Society.

JOHN STURM, JR., who was formerly a member of the firm of Sturm Brothers Company, which has recently been dissolved and the land divided among the members, is a son of John Sturm, the first of the name to settle in California. Unable to care for the land which he purchased the elder man induced his sons to come to California from the state of Illinois, where he had located the family upon his emigration from Alsace-Lorraine, his native land. John Sturm, Jr., is also a native of that country, where his birth occurred July 29, 1853. Brought to the United States in childhood he was reared in Illinois, receiving an education in the common schools. In 1873 he secured employment with Libby, McNeil & Libby Packing Company, as city salesman, being located in Chicago. After seven years he engaged in business for himself, becoming a retail coal dealer, and later engaged in the teaming business. Following his father and brother to California in 1898 he located in Portersville and purchased fifty acres which he finished planting to orchard, fourteen acres being in Washington navels and late Valencias, and also lemons. His property is located four miles east of Portersville, in which city he also owns some lots. In the same year in which he took up his work here Mr. Sturm returned to Chicago and brought his family to

his ranch, where they have since made their home.

In Chicago Mr. Sturm married Ann Loehr, a native of that city, and they are the parents of the following children: Emma Grace, the wife of A. V. Chandler, of Chicago; Anna Mabel, the wife of W. R. Hattersley, of Chicago; Edna Minnie; Ellen Pearl; John Lester; Walter Allen; Edith Philippine; and Genevieve Magdaline. Mr. Sturm is a member of the Evangelical Church, of which he is a trustee, and is also superintendent of the Sunday-school. Politically he is a staunch Republican. He is a director and president of the Campbell & Moreland Ditch Company, director of the Portersville Citrus Association, and director and vice-president of the Portersville Rochdale Company.

A. HAMMOND SCOFIELD. The thriving blacksmith shop and carriage manufactory conducted under the firm name of Scofield, Alvord & Co., have added considerably to the business activity of Merced, Cal., for the past twelve years. The senior member of the firm, A. H. Scofield, came to California in 1886, at which time he went to Stockton, and for one year was employed in a wheel manufactory there. His identification with Merced dates from 1887, from which time until 1890 he was in the employ of others as blacksmith and carriage-maker, trades with which he had become thoroughly familiar by intimate association with his father, who was an expert in these lines. Purchasing the carriage shop of Elgin Lewis in 1890, Mr. Scofield continued the business alone until September, 1892, at which time he took in as a partner E. R. Alvord, and in 1899 admitted his eldest son, Arthur L. Scofield. The business is now conducted under the name of Scofield, Alvord & Co., and compares favorably in both quality and scope with any like establishment to be found throughout the San Joaquin valley.

Born in Hamburg, Livingston county, Mich., August 7, 1836, Mr. Scofield is a son of Benjamin Ferris and Celestia (Wolcott) Scofield, the father born in Connecticut, and the mother a native of New York state. Her death occurred in Michigan. The Scofield family is of eastern origin, and as early as 1833 Benjamin F. located in Livingston county, Mich. His death occurred in 1863, in Howell, that county, where he had been the pioneer carriage-maker for many years. Of the nine children born to Benjamin F. and Celestia (Wolcott) Scofield, eight grew to years of maturity, and A. H. was the fifth child in order of birth. His training and edu-

age of twenty years, renting his father's dairy and pasturing the cattle on the present site of Millwood, Fresno county, which land his father homesteaded. It was then known as Mill flat, and was later sold to Smith Comstock, and later to the Millwood Company, which dammed it up for fluming lumber. He now takes his cattle to the Roaring river, the head-waters of the Kings river, where he has a permit from the government. He took the first cattle into that section and built the first trail into the mountains. He is also engaged in general farming on the old home place of seven hundred and sixty acres in the Antelope valley, combining this with his stock-raising industry. His brand is an anchor on the left hip. He has made a success of his work and has won the esteem and respect of all who know him, both for his business ability as well as the integrity which has marked his entire life.

In Visalia, December 12, 1886, Mr. Waugh was united in marriage with Fannie Kirkland, a native of San Francisco. Her father, W. P. Kirkland, was born in Mississippi, and in manhood conducted a steamboat on the Mississippi river. He took his family first to Central America, where he owned a cocoanut grove, and later brought them to San Francisco, where he engaged as a merchant. Removing to Visalia he filled many important public offices, among them that of county superintendent of schools and county auditor. He died in Visalia in January, 1900, at the age of eighty-one years. His wife, Louise, died early in life. They were the parents of ten children, seven of whom are now living, namely: Mrs. Howard, of Goshen; Alonzo, of Auckland; Mrs. Perzian, of Auckland; Mrs. McClure, of San Francisco; Walter, of Auckland; Mrs. Cason, of Visalia; and Mrs. Waugh, the youngest, who received her education in the schools of Visalia. To Mr. and Mrs. Waugh were born three children, namely: Harry, Earl and Lawrence. In his political affiliations Mr. Waugh is a staunch Democrat.

BONNIE BRAE RANCH, owned by the Merryman Fruit, Land & Lumber Company, and planted by George T. Frost in 1896, was under his management until 1904, when he was taken sick and died at his home in Riverside, Cal. Three hundred acres are in navel oranges, and two hundred acres are devoted to lemons, pears, olives, figs, vines, etc. The ranch comprises two thousand acres, divided into two parts, Badger Hill and Bonnie Brae ranches. The property is owned by A. C. Merryman and family, incorporated, with R. C. Merryman as manager, and in its management and care about thirty-five people are employed in the various departments.

Badger Hill tract is irrigated by three large wells, there being at the foot of the hill a pumping plant to carry the water to a reservoir of about two acres. From this reservoir, by means of a seventy-five horse-power electric motor, it is forced to the top of the hill, a distance of five hundred and eighty-six feet.

JOHN STURM. For the past forty years Rev. John Sturm has been active in the ministry of the Evangelical Church, and is also well known for his success as a horticulturist. A native of Alsace-Lorraine, France, his birth occurred June 16, 1824. His father, Jacob Sturm, was born in the same place, where he followed farming until his death. His wife, formerly Sarah Fröleh, was also a native of the same locality, where she died. Of their eleven children, six sons and five daughters, John Sturm was the third in order of birth. He received a preliminary education in the common schools of Germany and France, after which he worked for his father on the home farm until he was twenty-two years old. At the age of twenty-nine he married, and after remaining in his native locality for a time, came to America in 1854 and located in Chicago, Ill., near which city he engaged as a gardener until his removal to Nebraska in 1857, to Weeping Water, Cass county, engaging in trade for a livelihood. After remaining there eight years he located for a time in Oregon, Mo., where he was likewise occupied, returning in 1870 to the vicinity of Chicago. For the ensuing twelve years he was located in Wheeling, when he located in St. James, Minn., remaining there until 1896, when he sought a home on the Pacific coast, locating one mile northeast of Portersville, Tulare county, where he cultivated ten acres devoted to various kinds of fruits—oranges, prunes, apples, etc. In 1900 he located in Portersville, where he has a residence and two lots, with the cultivation of fruit to occupy his time.

In 1855 Mr. Sturm was ordained a minister in the German Methodist Episcopal Church, preaching in all the localities in which he has made his home. In 1875, in Barrington, Ill., he became identified with the Evangelical Church, in which faith he has since remained. He has a charge in Portersville, and delivers a sermon every second Sunday, remaining actively interested in the work although he is past eighty years of age. He is a regular attendant of the Annual Conference and Annual Camp Meeting held at Santa Ana, Cal.

In Alsace-Lorraine, Mr. Sturm married Madeline Herschberger, a native of that place, and they became the parents of eight sons and one daughter, of whom all but two sons are

living, namely: John, Jacob, Fred, Andrew, George, Daniel, and Lena, the wife of Chris Sturm, of Tulare county. The sons are all located in the vicinity of Portersville, and have ranches of their own with the exception of Andrew and George, who are interested in lands in North Dakota. Mr. Sturm has divided his property, which consisted of two hundred acres (one hundred acres of orange land) besides other ranches which he afterward purchased, giving his sons the land. The first four sons are married. Politically Mr. Sturm is a staunch adherent of the principles advocated in the platform of the Republican party.

JOHN NEHLS, an influential fruit-grower of Hanford township, Kings county, may with justice be termed a self-made man, as he was thrown upon his own resources at an early age, and his present position of independence has been reached solely as a result of his own unaided efforts. Born in Prussia, February 17, 1850, he was reared in his native surroundings, attending the public schools, until he was thirteen years of age. He was then brought to the United States by his mother, his father having died when he was a small child. After four weeks and five days on a sailing vessel Mr. Nehls and his mother landed in New York City in May, 1863, later going to Racine county, Wis. When fourteen years old he began to work as a farm hand, for a time receiving \$4 a month. For several succeeding years he worked on various farms during the summers and went to school during the winters, working for his board. Being economical, he saved his money and continued to follow farm work until he was twenty-one years old, in time accumulating \$1,000. Being obliged to seek a change of climate on account of asthma, he wisely determined to come to California.

On the first day of January, 1877, Mr. Nehls arrived at Hanford. Being well pleased with the outlook, he invested his savings in real estate, purchasing the forty-acre farm which is still his home and which is located two miles west of Hanford. Planting part of his land in vines he raised wheat on the remainder. In 1881 he returned to Wisconsin and married Miss Lucy Johncox, a native of that state, her parents being natives of England. Returning to California with his bride, Mr. Nehls continued farming along the same lines until 1886, that year planting five more acres in vines and seven in orchards of assorted fruits. These yielded such fair returns that he subsequently planted his entire farm to fruit, with the exception of a few acres reserved for pasture, and his place now contains many select varieties of peaches,

apricots and prunes, in addition to several fine vineyards of raisin grapes.

Five children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Nehls, of whom one died in infancy and the others are: George, aged twenty; Mazy, eighteen; Jennie, fourteen, and Alta, nine. In their religious inclinations the family favor the doctrine of the Christian Church, of which both Mr. and Mrs. Nehls are active members, the former officiating at the present time as elder. In his political views he is a staunch Republican, but has never sought office, and is a strong adherent of the cause of temperance. He has improved and beautified his place in many ways, having built a substantial two-story residence and other buildings. His land has not only increased in productiveness with the lapse of years, but also in value, being now worth from \$250 to \$300 per acre. As a citizen worthy of the fullest recognition in the early history of Kings county, whose services in various fields of labor for the advancement of the interests of his section will not soon be forgotten, Mr. Nehls has made an enviable record.

JOHN E. BAILEY. Well known among the most industrious, respected and prosperous men of Bakersfield, Cal., is John E. Bailey, an extensive land and property owner, and a stock raiser and dealer of note. In the achievement of his great material and financial success he has had no assistance, but has been the sole architect of his fortunes. Inheriting from his parents a good constitution, a sound mind and great energy, he began earning his livelihood when young, and from the start has met with encouragement and success. A native of Ireland, he was born November 28, 1852, in County Down, where his parents, James and Lusana Bailey, are both living, well advanced in years.

Reared in the Emerald Isle, John E. Bailey worked as a farm laborer until twenty years old, when he turned his face toward the New World. Crossing the Atlantic on a Cunard liner, he arrived in Boston, Mass., in November, 1872. Three months later he sailed from that city for California, coming by way of Panama. For about a month after arriving in San Francisco he drove a street car, and then went to Sonoma county, where he worked with a threshing machine gang for one summer. Mr. Bailey then tried to obtain work in the lumber camps at Duncans Mills, but failing in the attempt he came to Bakersfield in 1873, and the following year worked on the railway then being constructed between Lathrop, Bakersfield and Los Angeles. He subsequently found employment on ranches or canals for four years. Embarking in business on his own account in

the trip by way of the Isthmus of Panama. On his arrival in the state he located at Stockton, where he remained about five years, removing then to Woodbridge, San Joaquin county, a distance of ten miles from the former city, and becoming the owner of two ranches of three hundred and twenty and one hundred and sixty acres, respectively. This property he devoted to the cultivation of grain and stock-raising. In 1861 he removed to Calaveras county and conducted a saw-mill there until 1869, when he brought his family to Merced county and located on Bear Creek, where he engaged in ranching until his death, January 1, 1869.

Arthur Hill remained on the paternal farm until 1878, assisting in the home duties and the cultivation of the ranch. He then located upon his present ranch of twelve hundred and thirty-four acres and has since been engaged in grain-raising. He is located seven miles northeast of Merced and in a good farming section of the county. In his political preferment Mr. Hill is independent in his views, reserving his right to vote for the man whom he considers best qualified to serve the people officially. Fraternally he is identified with the Native Sons of the Golden West and Knights of Pythias.

FRED ACKERMAN. The sterling traits of character which have distinguished the citizenship of Fred Ackerman during his residence in Portersville, Tulare county, are a direct inheritance from a long line of sturdy German ancestors. He was born near Freiburg, Baden, Germany, November 25, 1857, the fifth in a family of thirteen children, of whom nine are living; three are in America and only one is in California. His father, Andrew Ackerman, was a native of the same locality in Germany, where he earned a livelihood as a farmer. He was a man of patriotism and loyalty, and during the revolution of 1848 he served in the German army. His death occurred August 8, 1903, at the age of eighty-five years, removing from the community a helpful and earnest citizen and one whose best efforts were always given for the betterment of the general welfare. Until his retirement on account of advanced age, he gave effective service as city trustee, and enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He was a devout member of the Lutheran Church. His wife, Anna Maria Ackerman, was also born in Baden, Germany, where her death occurred in July, 1902, at the age of eighty-three years.

Fred Ackerman was reared on the paternal farm to the age of fifteen years, receiving a practical education in the common schools of his native land. When fifteen he was sent to Stuttgart, where he was offered a place as a barber

with Fritz Schaentzel, having been apprenticed to learn this trade when fourteen years old. He also learned hair-dressing under Mr. Schaentzel, with whom he remained until 1874, when he came to America and located in Brooklyn, N. Y. He followed his trade in that city, and later in Hoboken, N. J., remaining until 1878, when he returned to Germany and spent the ensuing six months at home. Deciding again to locate in the United States, he returned to New York and remained there until 1880, when he went to Providence, R. I., then Manhattan Beach, thence to St. Louis, Chicago and Cincinnati, finally returning to New York in the same year. In 1881 he went to Chicago again, and from there to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he spent six months, thence to Butte, Mont., and in December of the same year to Helena. In the spring of 1882 he went to Cook City, National Park, and Bozeman, Mont., where he remained one year, then during the Coeur d'Alene gold excitement went to Spokane Falls, Wash. Returning to Helena, he remained until the fall of 1887, when he came to California and attended Barnard's Business College in San Francisco. In February of the following year he opened a barber shop in Portersville, which he conducted for eighteen months, when he returned to Cook City to settle up his affairs. For a time thereafter he was located in Whatcom, Wash., where he still owns property, conducting a successful business until 1891, when he returned to Portersville and opened a restaurant, bakery and lodging house, which brought him large returns for the period of three years that he was interested in it. He then sold the restaurant and bakery, and in 1900 sold the building, continuing the lodging house until 1901, when he finally disposed of that. In the meantime he purchased the Putnam block, containing two stores, the dimensions of which are 75 x 126 feet, holding it intact until January, 1905, when he sold thirty-five feet. He also owns other valuable business, residence and farm properties in this section, among which is a thirteen-acre orange tract adjoining the city, and three acres adjoining the high school building. Mr. Ackerman has had many experiences in his business career, but has met with success in his efforts which have given him a competence, and at the same time has won for himself the respect of those with whom he has had business dealings.

In Portersville, September 2, 1897, Mr. Ackerman was united in marriage with Catherine Sturm, a native of Alsace-Lorraine, and a daughter of Christian Sturm, a farmer of that locality. He came to America in 1892, locating first in Elgin, Ill., thence to St. James, Minn., where he remained four years, in October, 1897, coming to Portersville. In 1901 he returned to his

old home in Alsace-Lorraine. His wife, Madeline, is also living and enjoying the fruits of his early industry. They are devout members of the Lutheran Church. Mrs. Ackerman was the youngest child in her father's family. She is the mother of the following children: Ulrich, who died when one year old; Martha; and Rebecca.

Fraternally Mr. Ackerman is identified with the Woodmen of the World and Knights of Pythias, while his wife belongs to the Ladies of the Maccabees. He is a member of the Evangelical Association, and politically is a staunch adherent of the principles advocated in the platform of the Republican party. Interested in the progress and development of the city, Mr. Ackerman takes an active interest in every movement that pertains to the general welfare, acting as a volunteer fireman and holding the office of secretary of the fire department. Upon the incorporation of Portersville as a city he was elected one of the trustees.

ABNER FRASER. In promoting the agricultural and horticultural prosperity of Tulare county within the past few years the ranchmen, individually and collectively, have labored with diligence and perseverance, taking advantage of every feasible method offered by men of science and thought, and putting into their work as much brain power as physical exertion. The result is everywhere visible in the large orchards, productive vineyards and extensive fields of alfalfa that are in evidence on every hand, adding richness and beauty to the sunny landscape. Prominent among the enterprising and progressive men who have generously assisted in bringing about this grand evolution is Abner Fraser, a successful vineyardist and orchardist, living two miles southeast of Dinuba. A son of the late Robert John Fraser, he was born September 15, 1863, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. His grandfather, John Fraser, whose father emigrated from Scotland to Nova Scotia, was a lumberman by occupation, owning and operating a sawmill on East river, New Glasgow, where he was accidentally killed by a splinter which penetrated his abdomen.

Born and brought up in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Robert John Fraser learned the trades of a stone mason and plasterer, and also became an expert cooper. Moving to Massachusetts shortly after his marriage, he lived for a short time in Mansfield, where his oldest son was born. Returning from there to his native town, he lived in New Glasgow several years, following his trade. In 1868 he took his family to Omaha, Neb., where he worked as a stone mason for two years. Coming to California in 1870, he

took up land in Visalia, on the Tule river, and for a year carried on farming in connection with his trade. The following five years he was employed as a grain raiser on the west half of section 11. Homesteading one hundred and sixty acres of wild land, two miles east of Dinuba, in 1878, he changed it from a sheep range to one of the finest-improved ranches of this part of the county, setting out orchards and vineyards, and bringing the land to a high state of cultivation. On the ranch that he so improved he lived and labored successfully until his death, in 1898, at the age of sixty-nine years. He married Anna Forbes, who was born in Nova Scotia, which was also the birthplace of her father, William Forbes, a manufacturing cooper and prosperous business man, inheriting the industry and thrift characteristic of his Scotch ancestors. She survived her husband, and now resides near Dinuba, an active and esteemed woman of seventy-five years. Three children blessed their union, each of whom is represented in this volume: John W., Larkens K. and Abner, all of whom reside near Dinuba, and are actively identified with the agricultural and horticultural interests of the place.

But five years old when his parents removed to Omaha, Neb., Abner Fraser there began his study of books. Coming to Visalia with the family in 1870, he completed his early education in the district schools, and as soon as old enough learned the carpenter's trade, which he followed for several years, in the meantime becoming interested to some extent in fruit culture. In 1884 Mr. Fraser purchased his present home ranch near Dinuba, and has since devoted his time and attention to its improvement, sparing neither labor nor expense in his efforts to transform the wild range into a valuable and productive farming estate. When the ditch was completed in this locality, he set out his first vineyard, and has since bought adjoining land, having now one hundred and forty acres of rich and fertile land in his ranch. Here he has a peach orchard of fifteen acres and a vineyard of fifty acres, eighteen acres being planted to Muscat raisins, twenty to the Thompson Seedless, and twelve to Sultanas, the remainder of his land being sowed to alfalfa, which yields him rich and bountiful harvests.

Mr. Fraser married, in this part of Tulare county, Luana Hildreth, who was born in Sandyville, Iowa, and came to California with her father, James Hildreth, a well known photographer. Seven children have been born of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Fraser, namely: Clarence (attending the Dinuba Union high school, a member of the class of 1906), Violet (a pupil in the same school, belonging to the class of 1908), Rowena, Lucille, Ione, Robert and Aileen.