

The Salt River Valley the Farmers' Land

LLOYD C. THOMAS

The farmer or city man is immediately impressed with the fitness of the Salt River Valley for a great and prosperous community. Here the streams have filled up a great valley between the ranges of mountains with washings from the watersheds which is of course a very rich alluvial soil, completely filling what once must have been a great canyon. It is known that the soil in some places is six hundred feet in depth. They have gone down that far and do not know how much farther down it does go. The fine soil runs down for fifty or sixty feet when a bed of gravel is struck carrying pure water, then the same soil is encountered for about the same distance (fifty or sixty feet) and another bed of gravel, and so on for hundreds of feet. It will never be necessary to add fertilizer to this soil for it has been pronounced to be the richest in the world. In only two other places in the world has soil with the richness of Salt River Valley "loess" been discovered. The land is all very nearly level and it is necessary to level only a very small part of it to irrigate. The appearance of it would indicate that the whole valley was leveled ages ago by the aboriginal farmers who populated the valley. The writer has had the interesting experience of exploring some of the ancient mounds which at one time were large buildings erected by these people of whom so little is known and who at one time farmed this fertile country. Arguments have been advanced by some that this valley is the original site of the Garden of Eden (it certainly can be called that now without stretching the imagination) for people who have been all over the world and who know state that this beautiful climate and fine soil is equalled by none. Although some other localities have a much higher state of development it will only be a very short time until the country here is developed. The water question is forever settled now and there will never be any doubt as to whether or not there will be enough water for irrigation for the land. People are investing thousands of dollars in improvements without fear and it is the improvement and use that makes land worth money. Many people are coming here from California to invest their money and make their homes. California has reached about as high a state of devel-

ment as is possible with the limited amount of land which they have for agricultural purposes. It has been stated by well informed and responsible men that there is more irrigable land in the Salt River Valley than in all of southern California. The cost of water maintenance in the Salt River Valley is only \$1 to \$1.60 per acre per year while in California they think nothing of paying as high as \$10 per acre per year for the same service. Water is the most important factor. The less the cost of up-keep the larger the profits. It stirs all the farmer in one to look over these broad plains, seeing everywhere the absence of waste land, and the presence of soil that is rich in color, fine in texture,

mellow and inviting, and where cultivated, showing its qualities in the abundance of the crops. Plainly, when all the conditions are adjusted for the best results, we will look to find opulent farmers here, who live on the "fat of the land".

KINDS OF SOIL.

The different soils are known by the following descriptions: The sandy loam, the gravelly loam, the Maricopa loam and the Glendale loess. The sandy loam has less than ten per cent of gravel and is here the same as elsewhere, rich and easily worked. The gravelly loam constitutes the best land for orange purposes, and is of course closer to the mountains from which the soil was washed. This land is rapidly becoming more valuable and while it can still be purchased cheap in its unimproved state (before oranges or other fruit are planted) it will be the most valuable land that can be purchased. The Maricopa loam is of the same nature but a little heavier than sandy loam and is found in a very small part of the valley.

The Glendale loess spoken of in the first part of this article covers a big part of the valley. This is similar in type to that found in the Mississippi valley but much richer. Far out in the valley it represents the finer elements which naturally were carried farthest. It is highly decomposed material, and analysis shows much lime, potash, and phosphoric acid. The last is a most valuable constituent and exists here in the surprising proportion of twenty-two one-hundredths per cent. Five one-hundredths per cent is considered very good in what is called "rich" soil. A great deal of this Glendale loess is planted to sugar beets which of course are very rich in the elements that make up sugar, some of the beets being said to have as high as twenty-five per cent sugar.

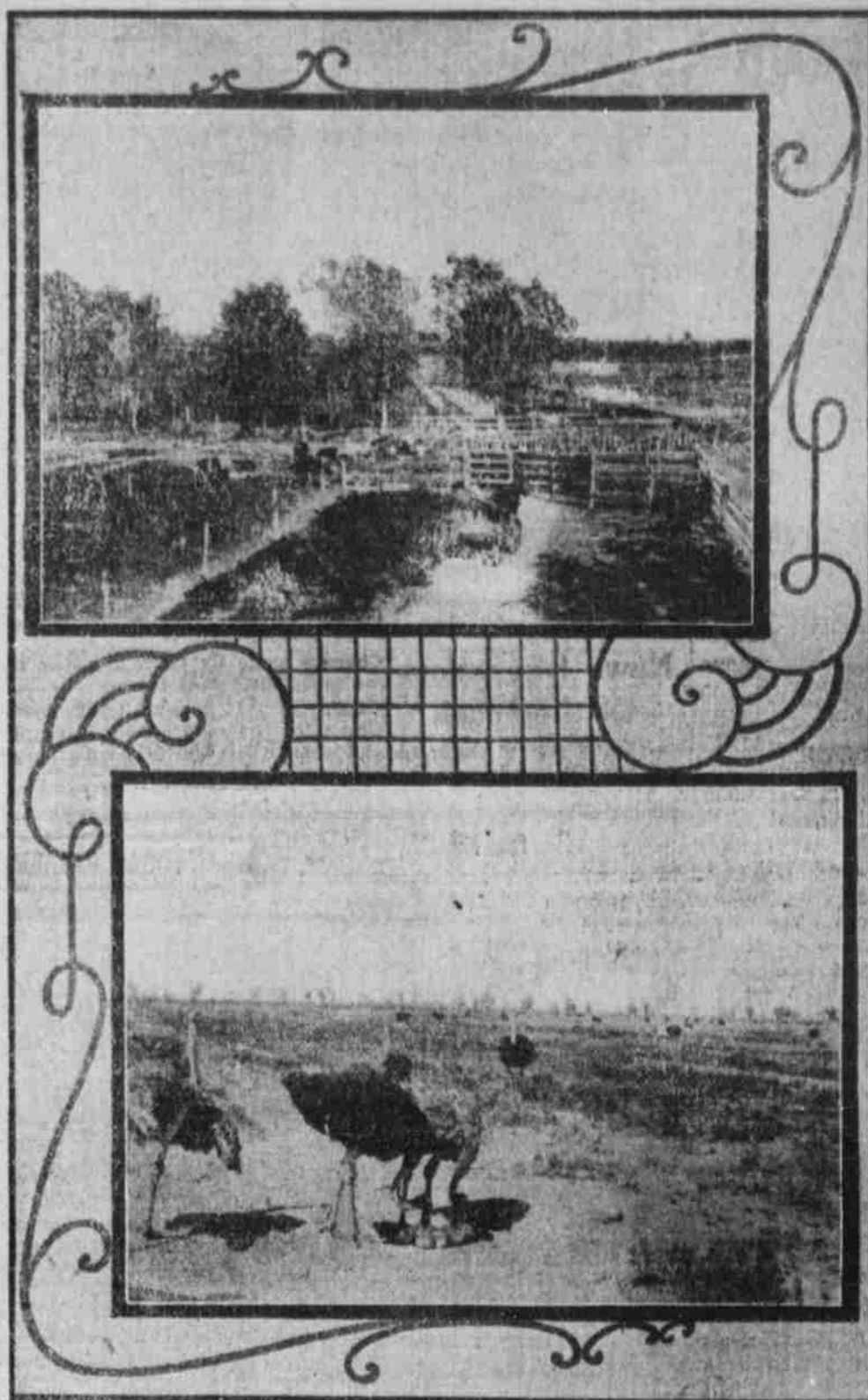
THE KIND OF CLIMATE

In a large part of our country (the United States) the summer is spent in preparing for the winter. People have been slow in learning that there is such a thing as good soil where an enjoyable climate can be found. The two most necessary elements of production are warmth and moisture combined with good soil. But few people have believed that there is a climate that does not hinder in the farm-

work. Here this is the case. The climate is ideal all the year round. "Growing weather" for crops is practically all the time. To be "frozen out," "burned out" and "dried out" is unknown here. When moisture is wanted, the water is "turned on" and that is all there is to it. Sugar beets come up in January and many crops are planted in that month. Alfalfa is green all the year and is cut from five to seven times per year.

I have before me a recent report of L. N. Jesunofsky, Sectional Director of the United States Weather Bureau, stationed at Phoenix. He says in part, "Located at an altitude of 1100 feet above sea level, Phoenix possesses fully as many distinctive climatic features relating to dry atmosphere, bright sunny days, marked absence of windstorms, and freedom from ice and snow as any other locality. "During the summer months, maximum temperatures of 100 degrees to 110 degrees are frequently recorded in the Salt River valley, which in themselves, are far less enervating than one would suppose, owing to the safeguard which nature alone has provided by the process of rapid evaporation. The sensible temperature experienced in this section is decidedly lower than at points located in the east or the central states. The definition of "sensible temperature" is that temperature which is felt at the surface of the body, notably upon the face and hands. The body is constantly furnishing moisture to the skin, which in cases exudes and stands in drops commonly called perspiration. This moisture is evaporated by the air, hence the cooling of the skin. This effect of cooling by evaporation, is a safeguard against the injurious effects of extreme heat. The cooling of the skin subjects the body to the direct effect of the sensible temperature. This temperature is obtained from what is known as the whirling psychrometer, consisting of a dry and wet-bulb thermometer, each, or the wet-bulb thermometer, namely a thermometer wrapped by muslin, of fine texture, which is moistened by a small receptacle of pure water. The dry and wet-bulb thermometers are fastened upon an iron frame which is whirled rapidly by means of an attachment to the iron frame. As the instruments are whirled around a given space, rapid evaporation from the wet-bulb thermometer ensues. During the process of whirling the wet-bulb thermometer is read a number of times to note the lowest reading, and the lowest depth to which the mercury sinks, at the time of observation, is the temperature shown by the wet-bulb, which is the sensible temperature.

"The readings of the dry and wet-bulb thermometers, as made at Phoenix, Arizona, on July 4, 1904, at 5:32 p. m., local time, may serve as an example: Air temperature, or dry-bulb thermometer reading, 105 degrees; wet-bulb, or sensible temperature, reading, 62 degrees; percentage of relative humidity in the air, 4 per cent. While the air surrounding the body



SCENES ON ONE OF THE SIXTEEN OSTRICH FARMS.

autumn. They have proven to be helpful to longevity, healthfulness, and freedom from those ailments attributable to morbific climates."

LAND VALUES AND PROFITS

Salt River Valley lands have been considered valuable for many years and are practically all in private ownership. Of this private land only about three-fifths is in cultivation but the balance is being rapidly put under the plow. As I have stated before it is farmers that are needed. When the storage dam is completed surplus lands in excess of 100 acres will be on the market for sale, the government having decided that this would be the maximum holding for one person or firm, the idea of course being to have the land distributed as much as possible. The good sense of this is apparent. The prices of raw land in tracts of all sizes ranges from \$100 per acre at a distance from town, to \$200 or more per acre closer to the city. Improved land now under cultivation sells for

from \$125 to \$500 per acre, depending of course upon the value and extent of the improvements together with the location and size of the tract. All of this land is advancing very rapidly in price and it can be purchased on easy terms at a reasonable rate of interest. The Dick Erdmann Real Estate & Investment Company recently sold a small tract to a gentleman from New York state for \$350 per acre. This was very close to the city and in a high state of cultivation.

These prices may seem rather high but there are several things to be taken into consideration.

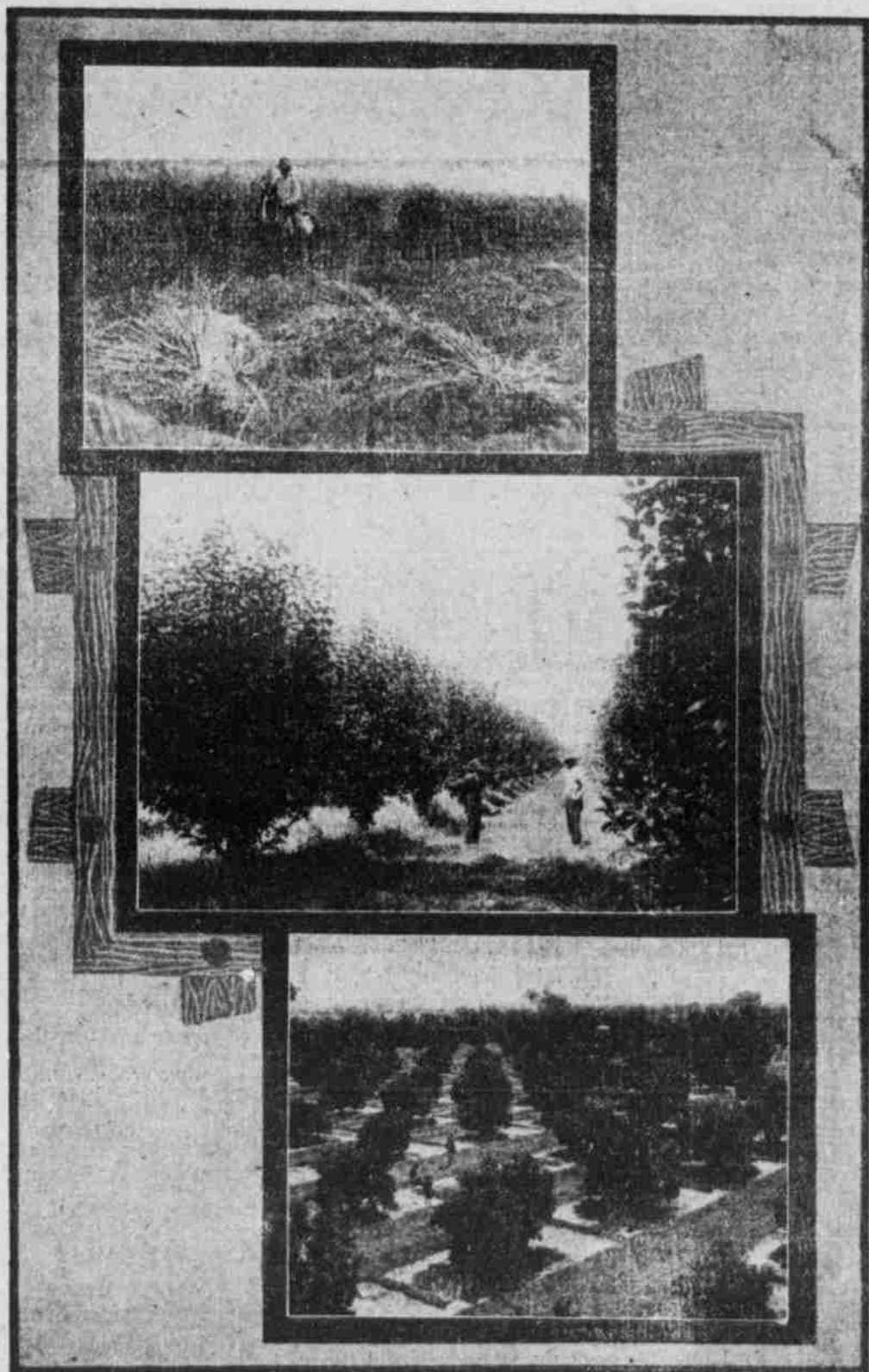
- This land is rightly rated as the best in the world.
- It is finely drained and easily irrigated.
- It has an excellent climate.
- Crops grow all the year round.
- It has plenty of moisture. Never a crop failure.
- It is much lower in price than other

lands similar in other older and better developed localities.

However the real value of land in any country should be based on its income-producing qualities. Any of the land in the Salt River Valley will, under cultivation, return an income of ten per cent net on a valuation of five hundred dollars per acre or more.

Demand makes values. This land is in demand. The valley is well watered; very rich; easily cultivated; beautifully situated in a healthful climate; and is all near a growing city, the Capital of the Territory soon to be a state, and one of the richest in the Union, with valuable mines, large amount of stock, and immense forests. The valley is an oasis in the desert and the Government thought so highly of it that it virtually made an investment of millions of dollars, this being the first irrigation project started by the Reclamation Service.

Phoenix, Arizona, April 27, 1910.



GRAIN FIELD. PEACH ORCHARD. ORCHARD SCENE.

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