

CCL Sister Chapter Presentation

CA 13 and CA10

Darin Haydock and Eileen Kerr, July 20, 2020



Sources:

Photo of CA 120 East just prior to CA 99 junction (Accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://www.aaroads.com/california/ca-120.html>)

Photo of cow wrangling in Modesto from KCRA 3 (accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://www.kcra.com/article/3-cows-wrangled-along-hwy-99-in-modesto/6428346>)

2010 economist article on the Appalachia of the west
<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2010/01/21/the-appalachia-of-the-west>

2013 AP article using Appalachia of the West
<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2010/01/21/the-appalachia-of-the-west>

2019 Sacramento Bee article on Appalachia of the west (The High and dry photo comes from this story):
<https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/big-valley/article233551287.html>

2004 presidential results map LA times 6.20 (accessed on 7.19.20 at <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-central-valley-presidential-candidates-20190604-story.html>)

Photo of Caucus from Carol Iowa, 2016 from LA Times 2.20 (accessed on 7.19.20 at <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-02-03/iowa-caucus-so-white>)

A great article by former New York Times food writer Mark Bittman that both challenges and reflects many of the stereotypes of the Valley. The key take away is that, if

you eat, your are directly connected to the Central Valley (accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/magazine/californias-central-valley-land-of-a-billion-vegetables.html>)

An published the Visalia Times Delta by author Frank Bergon on the diversity of the Valley and the dependence of its agricultural economy on that diversity. (accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://gvwire.com/2019/08/08/valley-is-diverse-invisible-and-most-productive-ag-region-in-u-s/>)



A brief economic history of the Central Valley

Water and its impact

- 1850s-1880s - Cattle and bonanza (dry) wheat farming
- 1890s: Irrigation Districts in Turlock and Modesto
- 1930s: Central Valley Project
- 1930s - : State Water Projects



First, a very brief overview of the history of the valley beginning with the Gold Rush

WATER is key to understanding the valley

During the gold rush, Europeans flooded into the Central Valley and began raising cattle and growing wheat to feed the miners in the foothills. Soil productive, but lacked a stable source of water, which limited ag production to these two industries.

1890s, local farmers created irrigation districts to store water and send it to local farms through canals, which allowed farmers to grow other crops.

1930s the New Deal financed Central Valley Project expanded these systems across the valley and California continued to develop water control systems with the State Water projects (that continue today).

This meant that the fertile soil of the Central Valley could now grow huge numbers of crops and support many livestock industries, and farmers took advantage of that.

Sources:

Historic Photo of the Central Valley from David Rumsey Map Collection (Accessed on 7.20.20 at <http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps1516.html>)

State and Federal storage and water conveyance systems map from the Bureau of Reclamation (Accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvp-water/docs/cvp-map-11x17.pdf>)

Diversified agriculture is key industry in Central Valley

Top 10 Agricultural Counties					
County	Total Value and Rank			Rank	Leading Commodities
	2017	\$1,000	2018		
Fresno	7,024,915	3	7,911,893	1	Almonds, Pistachios, Livestock (Unspecified), Grapes (Table)
Kern	7,254,004	1	7,469,670	2	Grapes (Table), Almonds, Pistachios, Milk
Tulare	7,050,855	2	7,213,141	3	Milk, Oranges (Navel), Grapes (Table), Cattle & Calves
Monterey	4,425,425	4	4,258,628	4	Strawberries, Lettuce, Broccoli, Wine Grapes
Stanislaus	3,648,192	5	3,569,989	5	Almonds, Milk, Chickens, Nursery
Merced	3,409,518	6	3,254,144	6	Milk, Almonds, Chickens, Cattle
San Joaquin	2,527,966	7	2,594,221	7	Almonds, Grapes (Wine), Milk, Walnuts
Kings	2,058,715	10	2,351,983	8	Milk, Pistachios, Cotton (Pima), Cattle & Calves

CA 9, 10, 16, 21, 22, 23 are all in the top 10% nationally of Congressional districts in terms of total market value of ag products sold

Four of the six are represented by Democrats

If we look at this transformation in today's terms; water has allowed farmers to feed the world.
 chart: of the top 8 counties in CA, 6 of them are in the Central Valley - see diversity of products

So when we think about that stereotype that the valley is red, it actually is not and as we will see, we have more often been led by Democrats than Republicans (until the polarization of politics that began in the mid 1990s)

Sources:

Top Ten Agricultural Counties chart from California Department of Food and Agriculture's Agricultural Statistics Review 2018-2019 (accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/statistics/PDFs/2018-2019AgReportnass.pdf>)

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold -Total SalesRanking of Congressional Districts by Value of Sales: 2017 - from the USDA Census of Agriculture 2017 (Accessed on 7.20.20 at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/Congressional_District_Rankings/cdr_1_020_020.pdf)

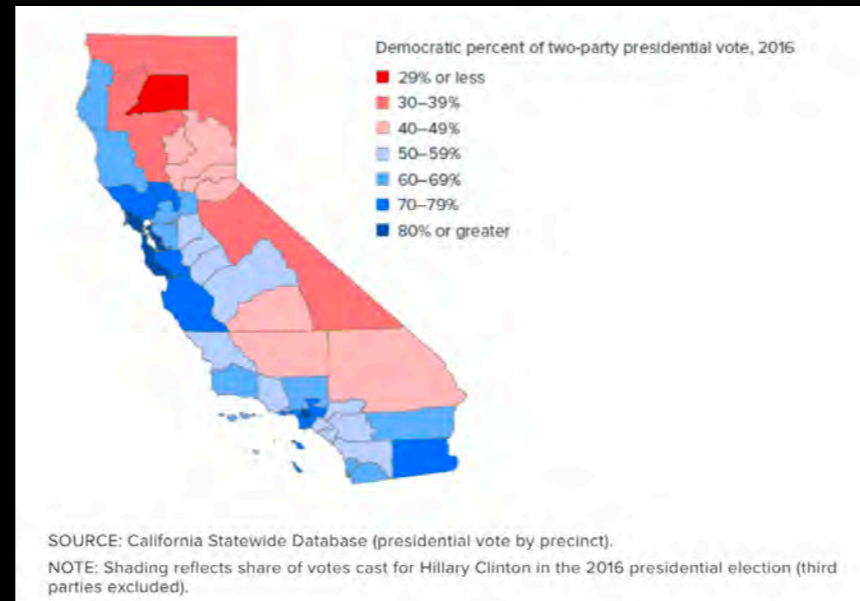
Comparing two districts: diversity, economics and politics



Sources:

Comparative demographic data from the US Census Bureau from Ballotpedia (Accessed on 7.19.20 at https://ballotpedia.org/California%27s_13th_Congressional_District and https://ballotpedia.org/California%27s_10th_Congressional_District)

2016 Presidential election in the Valley



Sources:

Image from PPIC California's Political Geography 2020. (Accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-political-geography/>)

A local perspective

"In 2016, as the drought neared its end in other parts of California — but not in the valley — a controversial and sullied presidential election revealed a widening gulf between the country and the city.

I came to see this split while writing about the valley, where mostly conservative small-town and rural residents sensed a clamor for their votes without a matching desire for understanding or empathy."
— Frank Bergon, 2019

Janet - Progressive activist and wife of a local dairyman

Christine - Democrat and local almond farmer

Both women must balance their political commitments with their economic reality

An article published the Visalia Times Delta by author Frank Bergon on the diversity of the Valley and the dependence of its agricultural economy on that diversity. (accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://gvwire.com/2019/08/08/valley-is-diverse-invisible-and-most-productive-ag-region-in-u-s/>)

Valley Politics (Modesto Area)



Tony Coelho
1979-1989



Jeff Denham
2013-2019



Gary Condit
1989-2003



Josh Harder
2019-



Dennis Cardoza
2003-2012

Are we red or blue?

Neither - we are as purple as any district can be

The Valley long had a tradition of electing Democrats, but those Democrats tended to be more conservative than Democrats nationally.

In 1994 after the the disastrous midterm elections took down the long standing Democratic Majority in the House, Democrats from purple districts formed what came to be known as the Blue Dog Coalition. Here is there mission statement from Representative Jim Costa's Webpage:

"The Blue Dog Coalition is an official caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives comprised of 26 fiscally-responsible Democrats, who are leading the way to find commonsense solutions. They are pragmatic Democrats, appealing to the mainstream values of the American public. The Blue Dogs are dedicated to pursuing fiscally-responsible policies, ensuring a strong national defense for our country, and transcending party lines to get things done for the American people."

Growing switch of leading Dems to Republicans beginning in 1990s

Our local governments dominated by now Republicans

Story of Jeff Denham:

Tea Party Republican

Republican outsider -redistricted into CA-10 in 2012

Farmer, so knew ag issues; called himself a moderate (like Dems before him)

If he favored immigration reform - for ag interests

If he favored any water policies - for ag interests

Refused to acknowledge that climate change was man-made

2018 Election and Josh Harder

Denham thought he would win all the way up to election night

Targeted Josh as having 'bay area values' - thought this would work

Harder ran on healthcare and Denham's vote to repeal ACA in 2017

Pulled in low propensity voters - and created a coalition of:

Democrats

Independents

moderate Republicans

What does this mean for how Harder operates in valley? And ultimately what you need to know about how we operate here:

Ag dominates the economy so he has to work to help them to help us all

His supporters expect him to be moderate in general

He is a progressive pragmatist

Bi-partisan Climate Legislation

FARM Act and Growing Climate Solutions

he wants "California ag to lead the nation to climate solutions"

He works in a bi-partisan way; looks for bi-partisan solutions. He is the most bi-partisan member of the House in this session.

Sources:

house.gov biography of Tony Coelho emphasizing the Valley agriculture (Accessed on 7.20.20 at <https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/11178>)