

80 VARIETIES OF FORAGE PLANTS  
AT U.S. PLANT INTRODUCTION GARDEN

ALMOND ORCHARD IN BLOOM



ONE OF CHICO'S CHURCHES

SIR JOSEPH HOOKER OAK  
BIDWELL RANCH

INDIAN CORN

## CHICO

By J. G. Neubarth, Secretary Chico Chamber of Commerce

The largest city of California north of Sacramento is Chico, "The City of Roses." The population has doubled during the past five or six years and now numbers, with the suburbs of Barbour and Chico Vecino, approximately 12,000. This rapid growth has been due to various activities, chiefly to the settlement of large areas of fine land near by and to the location here of the Pacific Coast factories of the Diamond Match Company.

Chico is situated in the midst of one of the finest bodies of land to be found anywhere. An early pioneer, passing this point in the '40s and spending a night in camp on the bank of beautiful Chico Creek, was so impressed with the fertility of the land and the natural beauties of the native forest that he resolved to return and build his home. This was General John Bidwell. He kept his resolve and lived and died in a stately home built on the bank of this creek, a stone's throw from the present city limits.

The Bidwell ranch is one of the most famous properties of this State, and is widely known through the variety and excellence of its products, and the beauty and grandeur of its native forests.

Chico enjoys a favored location on high ground near the east side of the Sacramento Valley. The Sacramento River flows four miles west and has an important influence on freight rates. To the east are the forests of the Sierra Nevada, reached by the Butte County Railroad, extending from this point to Stirling City, where the saw-mills of the Diamond Match Company are located. The Northern Electric Interurban line and the Southern Pacific main line afford splendid transportation facilities.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the quality of the soil of the Chico district. It is of the best. Every crop is grown, including fruits of every kind, alfalfa, sugar beets, corn, potatoes and many



HYDRANGEA AT BIDWELL GROUNDS.

others. Chico cherries are the best. The cherry orchard on the Bidwell estate is world famous. Forty tons of sugar beets to the acre were harvested on the Phelan ranch one season.

The Plant Introduction Garden of the United States Department of Agriculture is situated here; the site was selected by a committee of experts from the Department after a careful comparison of offered sites in all parts of the State. It consists of eighty acres, planted to many crops some of them new and strange to the country. The selection of a tract near Chico is a splendid endorsement of land and climate.

One of the first of the great ranches of this valley to be divided into farms and offered for sale was the Bidwell ranch. A portion of this fine property was placed on the market in 1901 and sold to settlers. Other lands have followed, with the result that the farm population of the Chico district has grown rapidly. In the beginning the prices of land were very low; they are still far below the actual productive value, kept down by the large supply, for this was the grain country and many wheat ranches remain. Good lands can be had at prices ranging from \$100 to \$150 an acre.

Chico is an important educational center. The State Normal School is situated here and has 370 pupils enrolled, and about 250 in the training department. A new high school recently completed is one of the finest in the State. Grammar schools are numerous, well housed and well taught. California has one of the best public school systems in the United States, the Chico schools are among the best in the State.

This is one of the most attractive of cities. Streets are well shaded, homes tell of thrift and refinement, and adjoining the city, a gift of Mrs. Bidwell to the municipality, is a magnificent public park of 1,900 acres of virgin forest. Mrs. Bidwell has also deeded to the State the wooded banks of the streams that traverse the ranch, in order that they may remain forever for the enjoyment of the people.



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL



PRUMES READY FOR GATHERING



TEN ACRES OF BERRIES.

