I. THE AREA

A. Description

1. Definition

This survey covers the City of Stockton and environs. The territory included is estimated to be something over 15 square miles and the present population in the neighborhood of 65,000 people. The City of Stockton proper contains an area of 10.34 square miles, and had an estimated population in 1937 of 56,525.

2. Location

Stockton is situated in the delta region of the San Joaquin River, and is 84 miles east of San Francisco, and 48 miles south of Sacramento, the capital city of the state.

3. History

Captain Charles M. Weber, the founder of Stockton, after exploring the possibilities of the entire San Joaquin Valley, finally located on the present site of the city in 1841. Stockton, while a thriving community at the time was benefited greatly by the discovery of gold in California in 1848. The city was incorporated by an act of the legislature in 1850, thus making it the oldest incorporated city in the entire San Joaquin Valley. Upon the discovery of gold, Stockton became the outfitting center for the "Southern" mines area. Wagon train routes with Stockton as their terminal, were established to all the southern mining districts. Supplies came to Stockton by light draft sailing vessels from San Francisco, the Atlantic Seaboard and other world ports. The trade and commerce thus early developed, together with the region's agricultural resources, provided Stockton with a sound economic foundation. The development of Stockton and its trading territory, while slow, was slow in its early years, and it was not until the Western Pacific Railroad line from San Francisco to Oakland reached Stockton on August 11, 1869 that the city really began to attain its present commercial and industrial importance.

With the coming of this first railroad, the city began to develop industrially and has since gained wide prominence as an industrial and distributing center. The city had a severe economic set-back during the period between 1925 and 1930. During these years a number of its industries either discontinued business or moved to other locations. The largest of these was the Caterpillar Tractor Company which moved its