10-5-1878

Nevada Farms. John Muir on the Agricultural Resources of Our Sister State Mountain and Valley Ranches-Virgin Wilds-Irrigation and Artesian Wells. (Special Correspondence of the Bulletin.) Ward, Nevada, September 29, 1878.

John Muir

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/jmb

Recommended Citation

https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/jmb/60

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the John Muir Papers at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Muir: A Reading Bibliography by Kimes by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.
Nevada Farms.

John Muir on the Agricultural Resources of our Sister State—Mountain and Valley Ranches—Virgin Wilds—Irrigation and Artesian Wells.

[Special Correspondence of the Bulletin.]

Ward, Nevada, September 29, 1879.

To the farmer who comes to this thirsty land from beneath rainfall skies, Nevada seems one vast, barren waste, which will never again be made beautiful, even though it be made so. The wells that once luxuriously watered the hillsides with their shallow basins of liquid gold are now but memories of a past time, and even their names are lost in the mist of the ages. The mountains, once covered with forests of pines and firs, are now but desolate waste lands, and the valleys, once fruitful, are now but barren deserts, which will never again be made beautiful, even though they be made so.

In green leafy regions, blessed with copious rains, we learn something of the agricultural potential of the soil by its natural vegetation. But this rule is only applicable here, for notwithstanding its natural vegetation, it is scarce at that. By a sparse growth of sage and juniper, the arid climate of Nevada makes it a desert. The irrigation of the fields by artificial means is the only way to make it productive.

The present rainfall would be wholly inadequate for agriculture, even if it were advantageously distributed over the area of the state. The high, dry plateau of Nevada, with its sparse rainfall, and its high, arid climate, renders it unsuitable for agriculture. The present rainfall is too sparse to support the growth of crops, and the future rainfall is too uncertain to be relied upon.

The rivers flowing through the state are the only source of water for irrigation. The Carson River, the Truckee River, the Humboldt River, and the Walker River are the principal rivers of the state. The Carson River, flowing through the Sierra Nevada, is the most important.

On the California side of the Sierra Nevada, the riparian forests are more dense, and the streams of water are more abundant. On the east side of the Carson River, near Winnemucca, are the Winnemucca Lake Beds, which are the source of the Carson River. The Truckee River, flowing through the Truckee Meadows, is the source of the Truckee River, which flows into the Nevada Lake. The Humboldt River, flowing through the Humboldt Valley, is the source of the Humboldt River, which flows into the Humboldt Lake. The Walker River, flowing through the Walker Valley, is the source of the Walker River, which flows into the Walker Lake.

The valleys of Nevada are the only places where agriculture can be successfully practiced. The mountains are too barren and the desert too arid to be made productive. The valleys, on the other hand, are furnished with water by the rivers and streams flowing through them. The valleys are also more fertile, and the climate is more favorable for the growth of crops.

The irrigation of the fields by artificial means is the only way to make the desert productive. The rivers of water are the only source of water for irrigation. The rivers are furnished with water by the snows of the mountains, and the snows are furnished with water by the rains of the atmosphere. The irrigation of the fields by artificial means is the only way to make the desert productive.