

Annie L. Morrison and John H Haydon, 1917, *History of San Luis Obispo County and environs, California, with biographical sketches of the leading men and women of the county and environs who have been identified with the growth and development of the section from the early days to the present* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company), pp. 548-551

ISAAC S. VAN MATRE.— Success is an indefinite, indefinable something for which many a man strives, and the attainment of which is supposed to give happiness to the lucky ; but whatever reward is granted in return for the struggle, it is certain that no one enjoys reaching the goal more than such a pioneer as Isaac S. Van Matre, who, by his own hard labors, self-denial and consistent application to duty, has created all that he possesses.

Born in Hempstead county, Ark., December 20, 1844, Isaac was the son of Abraham J. Van Matre. a native of Illinois, who settled in Hempstead county, where he became both a merchant and a farmer. The elder Van Matre later removed to Red River county, Tex., where he was engaged as a stockman and a farmer, and in 1868 he came overland to California with the subject of our sketch. He homesteaded land in San Luis Rey valley, and later removed to Watsonville. There he was a merchant until he retired, and after that he lived with his son, Isaac, dying in 1911 at the age of eighty-seven. Many were the stirring memories of his life, and not the least those which carried him back to Civil War days and his service, for a year, in the cause of the Confederacy. Isaac Van Matre's mother was Melinda Clampit, a native of Tennessee, who died in 1868, in San Diego, the mother of four children, three of whom are living. Mr. Van Matre's maternal grandfather, Colonel Logan, served as an officer in the Revolutionary War.

The oldest child was Isaac, who was brought up in Arkansas until he was three years of age, when he went to Texas with his parents, and there attended the public school. He also learned to help farm, and while riding the range he got his first insight into the stock business, which engaged him for eight or ten years. In 1868, he crossed the plains with mule teams, making for San Diego just when the new town was started. There he helped haul lumber for the Horton House, and then he went to farming on the ranch in San Luis Rey valley. At the beginning of the eighties he came to Santa Barbara county; and finding attractive ranch work at Los Alamos, he farmed there for four years.

In 1884. Mr. Van Matre located in San Luis Obispo County, buying the ranch of two hundred fifty-eight acres, one mile from Creston, that he still owns. In addition to regular tilling of the soil, he took up stock-raising, and for many years ran a dairy in addition, milking from twenty to thirty of the finest Durham cattle. He shipped the cream to Los Angeles, and there soon won positive recognition for his farm products. Having also installed a pumping plant from the natural wells on his estate, he was able to raise alfalfa on a large scale. Not content with this important venture, he homesteaded a hundred si.xty acres on the Carissa Plains, and later he bought three hundred twenty acres more. He now has four hundred eighty acres given to grain and stock, which he leases to his sons.

While in San Diego county, Isaac Van Matre was married on October 20, to Miss Permelia J. Hickey, a native of Titus county, Tex., and with her he has had five children. Joseph is married to Sadie Barnes and has ?--? child: Velma M. ; Jennings married Barbara Glenn; Henry married Dosie Denny, and they have three children, Esther, Wesley and Virgil. The three above-named sons are farming some four thousand acres, using caterpillar engines, on Carissa Plains. Mary, Mrs. Scott, lives at Porterville and has children: Ida, Arline, Harvey and Henry. Leslie was married to Lucy Tucker of San Francisco, who died at Creston on August 23, 1916, leaving two children, Vincent and Margaret. Leslie is engaged in stock-raising on Carissa Plains.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Matre own and occupy a residence in Creston. Mrs. Van Matre's parents, Isaac and Melinda (Marshall) Hickey, were natives of Tennessee. They removed to Texas, where they resided until 1865, when they came by ox teams to California. Isaac Hickey was a minister of the Baptist Church for over forty-three years. He was a clear and forceful speaker, and was a conscientious Christian man who lived up to his teachings. They spent their last days in Creston, and died at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Van Matre, the father aged seventy-three, and the mother eighty-six years of age. Mrs. Van Matre is also descended from old Revolutionary stock. In politics, Mr. Van Matre is a Democrat. He has devoted much time and attention to school affairs as trustee for the San Juan district. Like his wife, he is an active participant in the religious life of the community, being a charter member of the Church of God in Paso Robles.