



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

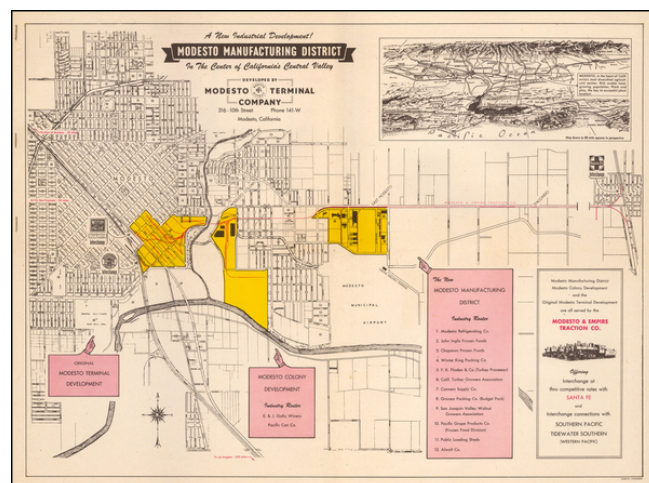
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Modesto Manufacturing District In the Center of California's Central Valley

Stock#: 58188
Map Maker: Modesto Terminal Company
Date: 1917 circa
Place: Modesto
Color: Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 20.5 x 15 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A New Industrial Development in Modesto

Rare promotional map and pamphlet, promoting the Modesto Manufacturing District "in the heart of California's most diversified agricultural section."

The map was produced by the Modesto Terminal Company, which was created by two railroad companies in Modesto to promote industrial land use projects within the city in 1917.

Modesto Terminal Company

In the late 19th century the San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley Railway, financed by Claus Spreckels, completed its main line through north-central California in the fertile San Joaquin Valley as a means of providing competition to the Southern Pacific. The SF&SV route would become part of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe's main line through the state. While the line provided an excellent alternative transportation artery between Sacramento and Bakersfield it bypassed downtown Modesto to the east by about five miles. So, the town decided to construct their own line, founding the Modesto Interurban Railroad in March of 1909. The MI was completed within the year to Empire. However, the property would sit unused for two years before operations actually got under way.

With little freight business in the area, it was leased to the Tidewater & Southern on April 18, 1911 as an interurban operation. The T&S had arrived in Modesto a month earlier and was operating a 7-mile system to the Stanislaus River. Ultimately, the interurban did nothing with the MI property and it continued to remain dormant. Then in July of that year a young rancher by the name of T.K. Beard stepped forward,



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offering to purchase equipment for the road and operate it if the company's outstanding debt were paid off. The stockholders agreed and the property was turned over to Beard a few months later, renaming it as the Modesto and Empire Traction Company on October 7, 1911. Officially, the new MET opened to the public on November 11, 1917.

The Modesto & Empire Traction Company (MET) was founded in the early 20th century by the town of Modesto, California to see additional rail service brought to its community. While the MET was officially an interurban railway, it never utilized electric operations and from an early date began focusing on its freight business.

For the new owner, the focus quickly became establishing a strong freight business. In 1917, Beard worked with the Tidewater Southern (reorganized from the Tidewater & Southern) to construct an industrial park in Modesto, controlled by a subsidiary known as the **Modesto Terminal Company**. This area eventually drew several businesses and became a very important aspect of the company's freight business. The MET survived the depression years without falling into bankruptcy and saw traffic explode during World War II. Interestingly, though, it was directly after the war that the railroad experienced its biggest growth. At the time the little shortline had built another industrial park, the Beard Industrial District (a vision of Mr. Beard's years earlier who had passed away in the 1920s), which quickly saw new businesses spring up there (by the late 1960s it boasted three dozen).

Modesto History

Located between Stockton and Merced, the town of Modesto was one of the largest communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

The city was originally a stop on the railroad connecting Sacramento to Los Angeles. When Modesto was founded in 1870, it was to be named Ralston after financier William C. Ralston.

Modesto's population was over 1,000 residents in 1884. With fields of grain, a nearby Tuolumne River for grain barges, and railroad traffic, the town grew. Irrigation water came from dams installed in the foothills, and irrigated fields of vegetables and fruit and nut trees flourished. By 1900, Modesto's population was over 4,500. During World War II, the area provided canned goods, powdered milk, and eggs for the US armed forces and Allied forces.

The city's official motto, "Water Wealth Contentment Health," is emblazoned on the downtown Modesto Arch, which is featured in local photographs and postcards. The motto was selected in a contest held in 1911, where the winner won \$3 as his prize. Modesto's motto is sometimes spoofed as "The land gets the water, the bankers get the wealth, the cows get contentment, and the farmers get the health."



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Rarity

The map is very rare. We locate no other examples.

Detailed Condition: