

Where Water Flows, Food Grows

As the population of Inyo County grew, so did the demand for more food products. Keeping the large number of soldiers fed at Fort Independence created the need for farmers as well as the ranchers. With the Owens Valley averaging less than 7 inches of annual precipitation, irrigation would play a key part in successful farming and ranching.

Though most agriculture was first centered in the Independence area, large operations soon developed in Big Pine, Bishop, and Round Valley. The warm and long summers proved perfect for several types of crops, as long as they had enough water.

Large and powerful irrigation districts were formed to bring precious water to the fertile lands. Nearly 80,000 acres of the county was under cultivation producing everything from apples to alfalfa.

