



SPANISH CORK OAK PLANTATION

DEDICATION PROGRAM

CHICO FORESTRY STATION & NURSERY SITE

CEDAR GROVE
BIDWELL PARK, CHICO, CALIFORNIA

Birthplace of Scientific Forestry in California
Registered California Historical Landmark No. 840-2

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1972
10:00 A.M.

Co-Sponsors:

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, *Division of Forestry*
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, *Department of Parks & Recreation*
CITY OF CHICO: *City Council*
Department of Parks
Bidwell Park & Playground Commission

IN COOPERATION WITH:
Butte County Historical Society
University of California,
School of Forestry & Conservation
Forest History Society
Greater Chico Chamber of Commerce

DEDICATION PROGRAM

PRESIDING

Mr. W. B. Carter
Chairman, California State Board of Forestry

PRESENTATION OF COLORS
Chico Boy Scouts of America

INVOCATION

Reverend Robert Scott
Pastor, Bidwell Memorial Presbyterian Church

REMARKS

Mr. Lewis A. Moran, *State Forester*
California Department of Conservation
Division of Forestry

Professor Woodbridge Metcalf
Extension Forester, Retired
University of California

Mr. John L. Hammon
President
Butte County Historical Society

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Harold Ray Crane
Member, California State Board of Forestry

PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE

Mr. Ray B. Hunter
Deputy Director
California Department of Parks and Recreation

ACCEPTANCE

Mayor Eric Bathen
City of Chico

PLAQUE TEXT

Chico Forestry Station and Nursery

In 1888, the State Board of Forestry established an experimental Forestry Station and Nursery, a companion to the Santa Monica Station established in 1887. The two were the first such stations in the Nation. Exotic and native trees were tested and produced for scientific and conservation purposes. The Station was operated by the Board of Forestry until 1893. California Registered Historical Landmark No. 840-2. Plaque placed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation in cooperation with the California Division of Forestry and the City of Chico, May 25, 1972.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The Chico Forestry Station, established February 23, 1888, by a grant of land from General John Bidwell, was a companion station to the Santa Monica Forestry Station established a few months earlier. The two stations were authorized by the first State Board of Forestry.

The Chico Station, with its nursery, provided and tested trees for planting throughout Northern California while the Santa Monica Station was concerned primarily with trees suitable for Southern California.

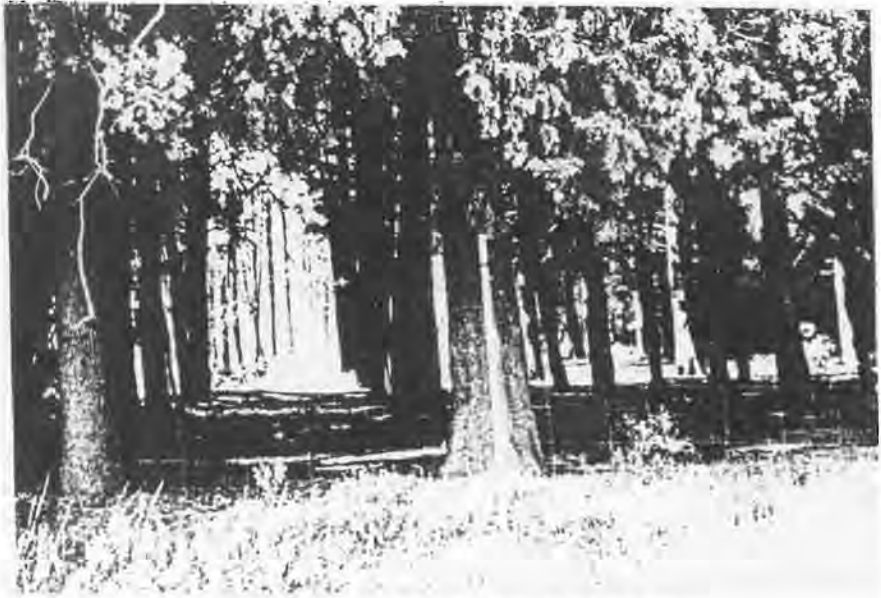
The Chico Station was located in what is now the City of Chico's Bidwell Park. Many trees from the original trial planting are still evident. Of particular note are the beautiful coast redwoods. These are now over 100 feet tall.

The State Board of Forestry wrote to General Bidwell on November 14, 1887, requesting 50 acres of land for the site. The Board visited the site on January 27, 1888, and following that visit, General Bidwell granted 37 acres to the State on February 23, 1888.

In 1890 it was reported that 15,927 trees had been set out on 29 acres of Station land and 30,000 small trees were in the Nursery. This was reported by the Superintendent of Stations, William S. Lyons, on March 18, 1890. He also reported that planting of extensive conifer plantations on 29 acres was nearly completed. Colonel C. C. Royce, then General Manager of Rancho Chico, acted as patron of the Forestry Station at that time.

Many exotic tree species, both conifers and hardwoods, were raised and set out in test plantings within the Station and around the northern part of the State. Seeds and seedlings were given away to landowners. Large trees were balled in burlap and sold to landowners in 1891 and 1892. In the two years five carloads of trees were distributed to various clubs and schools for highway plantings.

In 1893, the State Board of Forestry became embroiled in political squabbles. It was dissolved by the State Legislature in July of that year. Ownership and management of the Forestry Station and Nursery was transferred to the University of California at that time. Robert Pennell, Principal of the Chico Normal School, now Chico State College, was appointed as patron of the Station. It was considered that the school would gain considerable educational value from the arboretum and nursery. Trees were labeled so that students could study the various kinds of trees. The State College still considers the arboretum a valuable educational asset.



ITALIAN CYPRESS PLANTATION

A Spanish Cork Oak Plantation was established in 1904. This was, and still is, the largest such plantation in the United States. Experimental stripping of cork was done during World War II.

Mr. ~~Chick~~ ^{Hansen} Shinn was in charge of the Forestry Station from 1893 to 1904. Considerable planting was done during that period. From 1905 to 1915, Professor Steubenrauch, of the University of California Pomology Division, was in charge of the Station. Mr. J. Moore was the local custodian and was responsible for its maintenance.

Mr. Woodbridge Metcalf was in charge from 1915 to 1921. He did some experimental work and in 1918 made a survey of the trees remaining in the Plantation, noting that 150 species were still growing. Mr. Metcalf, University of California Extension Forester Emeritus, still maintains a keen personal interest in the Station.

The Station was sold to the City of Chico in November 1921, and has remained in that ownership since. The Station and Nursery have been a valuable contribution to the State. Trees have been furnished for highway plantings, parks, and school grounds, and farm windbreaks. Much of our present knowledge about adaptability of various tree species to Northern California conditions can be attributed to results of the early experimental plantings.

This area is now considered extremely valuable as a nature study area by the City Park Department. A nature trail has been developed and various species have been identified and signed along the trail. This area is used by teachers of the Chico Unified School District for nature study. A guide for this study has been developed and distributed throughout the system. The only reserved major picnic facility within Bidwell Park is also located in the Old Forestry Plantation which is called Cedar Grove and seats 400 persons.