



*Men of achievement in the
great Southwest*

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Men of Achievement

IN THE

Great Southwest

Illustrated

A STORY OF PIONEER STRUGGLES

DURING EARLY DAYS IN LOS ANGELES AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

With Biographies, Heretofore Unpublished Facts, Anecdotes and Incidents
in the Lives of the Builders

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THOMAS HUGHES.

SINCE the days of '49 California has drawn upon the brain and brawn of the older-settled Eastern States for her population, with the result that she is today peopled with the most ambitious and progressive of the young men of the East—men who had the courage and hardihood to make the tedious sea voyage or the fortitude to stand the hardships of the overland trail, and Southern California and Los Angeles, in particular, still attract the eastern men in these days of luxurious transcontinental travel when the trip is made from coast to coast in less than four days. The result is that there are few more cosmopolitan cities in the United States than ours. While Southern California possesses many natural advantages and resources as exploited in this work, the writer realizes that to the business men who have invested their own means and interested others in the development of her latent natural resources belong the credit for the marvelous record Los Angeles has established for the past two decades, and it is therefore with pleasure that we present the accompanying brief sketch of one who will be recognized as foremost and pre-eminent in advancing the general welfare of this section of the State.

A Pennsylvanian by birth, Thomas Hughes made his debut upon the stage of life on the old Hughes homestead in Green county, Pa., about forty miles south of smoky old Pittsburgh. As a boy he early developed those sturdy attributes of character which have marked his career through life. Self-reliant and possessed of an indomitable will, Thomas Hughes equipped himself for life's battles by serving an apprenticeship in his father's planing mill on the banks of the Monongahela. At the age of twenty, being an ambitious youth, he determined to try his fortunes in the broader fields of the West. Eighteen hundred and seventy-eight found Kansas, New Mexico and the Southwest in rather a crude condition. The great Santa Fé system had just been built into those States and Territories and business conditions were good. It was around Albuquerque, Las Vegas, Clifton and other busy frontier towns of the embryo State that young Hughes found employment as millwright and in railroad work, for the ensuing four or five years. Working for a salary, however, was never a part of Hughes'

ideas of self-reliance, and he determined to enter business for himself at the first opportunity.

The year 1884 found Los Angeles the same little pueblo that it had been for the preceding ten years. At that time there was little evidence of the feverish activity that was so soon to be witnessed here, but Thomas Hughes, with the business foresight of few others, saw the possibilities presented, and decided to cast his anchor in the little city of less than 15,000 souls. His first work was secured in a local planing mill, and he held the position until two years later, when he had saved enough to purchase machinery of his own and start into business on his own account, in 1886, at the very commencement of the great building boom that started at that time and

has continued, with but short intermissions, since.

Success attended his efforts from the start. Each succeeding year found the business expanding and growing under the active personal management of Mr. Hughes, until today over one hundred and twenty-five men find steady employment in the mills of the Hughes Bros. Sash and Door Factory. The manufactured product is shipped to many eastern points, Denver, Colo., taking a large portion of the sash and doors manufactured from the famous sugar pine of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the vicinity of Fresno and Madera.

The year 1894 marks the beginning of an epoch in oil annals in the State, for it was about that year Los Angeles made her debut into the oil world. Born and raised in the heart of the great oil regions of Western Pennsylvania, Mr. Hughes while a boy became conversant with oil

mining and the method of production, and it is not surprising that we find him on the ground in the very beginning. A small amount of work had been done in the vicinity of Lake Shore avenue, and, in fact, but fourteen wells had been sunk when Mr. Hughes was attracted to the district, while today there are over 1300 wells in the city limits, and the annual production in the State has increased from 783,078 barrels in 1894 to 25,000,000 barrels in 1903. In association with one or two business acquaintances, Mr. Hughes lost no time in acquiring an interest in the new fields. The first company formed was the American Oil Company, and active development work soon followed its organization. So successful



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were the efforts made that Mr. Hughes, becoming convinced of the permanency of the district, devoted more and more time to the oil business, until today he has holdings in many of the best fields of the State. Following the formation of the American Oil Company, came the formation of a number of others during the following few years, all in the same district, many of which are among the most successful of the field and are a large factor in swelling the total of local production.

Among the most valuable of Mr. Hughes's holdings in the State is the Fullerton Oil Company, which company owns fifty acres in fee, in the heart of the Fullerton field. The company was formed by Messrs. Hughes and Valentine, and has established an enviable record as a producer, being credited with from \$6500 to \$7500 a month.

As new districts were opened in various sections of the State, Mr. Hughes personally inspected the merits of each,

and large fortunes will be made in the years to come, but to men who invested their means in the development of the industry too much credit cannot be given for the tenacity and perseverance which, in spite of numerous obstacles, won in the struggle for supremacy. Mr. Hughes is a pioneer in the various fields in which he operates, and while conservative in all his investments, he is among the most active and progressive oil men in the city, and State as well. He has associated with him in a number of his companies some of the most wealthy and influential bankers and business men of this city.

The career of Thomas Hughes records a series of progressive moves. It was his role in life's drama to rise and advance; hence, it is but in the nature of sequence that two years after reaching Los Angeles, a mere lad in years, he is the proprietor of a fully-equipped planing mill, and a few years later he is among the most successful oil operators in



RESIDENCE OF THOMAS HUGHES.

and, when conditions justified, invested freely in the development of the industry that has placed California well to the front as an oil-producing State. Possibly the most conspicuous and successful of Mr. Hughes's exploitations was the opening up of the highly-productive Santa Maria district in Santa Barbara county. Although one hundred miles from any producing well, Mr. Hughes, in February, 1901, located the ground now owned by the Western Union Oil Company, and drilled well No. 1 of that company. Success attended his efforts from the start, and today the Santa Maria district is one of the most important in the State. The Western Union Company is owned by some of the most prominent business men and financiers of this city, Mr. Hughes being one of the heaviest stockholders, as well as the original locator.

Large fortunes have been made in the oil fields of Cali-

the State and a power in the welfare of his adopted home. Business and financial cares have never blinded Mr. Hughes to the political welfare of his city and State. Endowed with rare business acumen, and the possessor of exceptional executive ability, he has made his presence felt in both local and State politics for a number of years, not from the standpoint of an office-seeker, for Mr. Hughes has steadily declined nominations, but in all his political work he has been actuated by a desire to see the best results obtained, and is an ardent supporter of the tenets of the Republican party.

Coming to California without capital or friends two decades ago, he has demonstrated the value of energy, foresight and pluck in building up a profitable business. He is in the truest sense of the word a self-made man, and the many striking instances Los Angeles affords boast no better example.