

14. SELECTION COMMISSION PUNTS

While Scott was fretting and charges were flying, the Commission was divided. Most significantly, UC President Wheeler had strong misgivings about any non-Berkeley site, and especially one outside Alameda or Contra Costa County.

It was not until November 27 that the Commission decided to deal with its internal divisions by "punting" the matter to an

outside expert in the form of UC Professor of Agricultural Practice and Superintendent of Agricultural Extension, Edward J. Wickson.

Wickson was asked to tour all the sites, evaluate them, and to make a recommendation.

He was still engaged in this process at the end of 1905.

With Wheeler continuing to drag his feet and to favor a Berkley or a close-to-Berkley site, the Commission is stalled. Finally, it met on Monday, November 27 and, in a football metaphor, "punted" the problem to an "expert," Professor E. J. Wickson.

Lt. Governor Anderson tried to simplify Wickson's evaluative task by confining it to only Yolo and Solano counties. But, Wheeler pulls for Berkeley to the end by persuading the Commission that Wickson should examine all the sites, and yet others he might develop.

STATE FARM COMMISSION TAKES ACTION

FAVORABLE TO EARLY SELECTION OF SITE

Lieutenant Gov. Alden Anderson Says the Farm Should be Located either in Yolo or Solano Counties - Prof. Wickson Appointed to Inspect the Sites [offered] and Report in Jan'.

(Tuesday's Sacramento Union.)

The commission appointed to select a university farm, as provided for by the legislature at its last session, held a meeting in Governor Pardee's office Monday afternoon.

The meeting was attended by Governor Pardee, Lieutenant Governor Alden Anderson, President Benjamin Ide Wheeler and Professor E. J. Wickson, of the state university.

George W. Pierce and a deputation from Davisville appeared before the commission stating that Yolo county has everything to offer in the way of climate, soil, area and irrigation, for an ideal location for a state farm.

The commission engaged in a general discussion as to whether they will visit several additional sites which have been offered, appoint an expert to inspect and report them. Lieutenant Governor Anderson stated he does not believe the commission will accomplish much by visiting the different sites, and merely generalizing. He said he would be willing to have an expert, Professor Wickson, or somebody else, appointed, and have him inspect the sites and report.

He added that when the commission takes all requisites into consideration he is convinced that it will have to go to Yolo or Solano county for a site for the farm.

In answer to questions by President Wheeler, Mr. Anderson said that anything which can be grown in Fresno county can be grown in Yolo and Solano counties, Fruits ripen earlier and remain longer in the two counties named than in Fresno, he said, and this section of the state has the longest shipping season.

Afer a short discussion Lieutenant Governor Anderson moved that Professor Wickson be appointed to inspect sites offered in Yolo and Solano counties and report to the commission their availability.

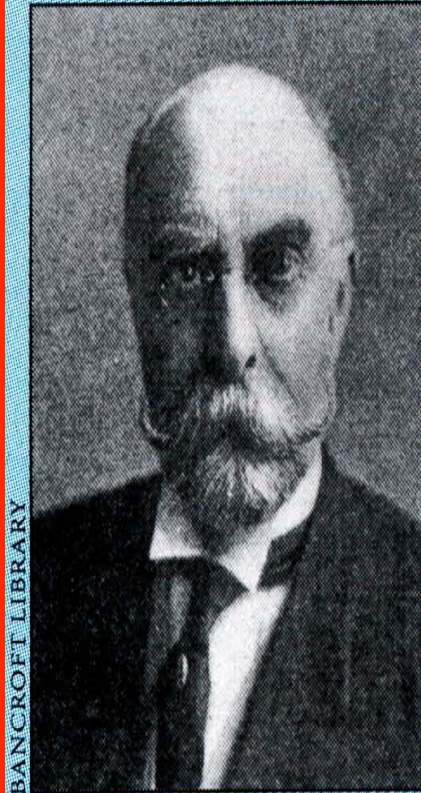
Governor Pardee asked if this motion would shut out other counties which have offered sites—Anderson replied that that was his purpose.

Professor Wickson stated that if he should be selected as the expert he would give the matter his close attention, and would undoubtedly be able to submit a report early in January.

President Wheeler amended the motion so as to have Professor Wickson inspect all the sites offered, and to look-up other possible sites.

Carrying out the Commission's charge, "in six midwinter weeks" he logged "2,034 miles, . . . consulted with more than 200 people" and "visited 69 sites." He reduced the list to four sites, including the Sparks ranch, and expressed his personal preference for a site in Contra Costa county.

To the right is an official representation of Edward Wickson appearing as a "sidebar" in Ann Scheuring, *Abundant Harvest* p. 10. Quotes above are also from Scheuring, p 18.)



Edward J. Wickson (1848–1923)

Friend of the Farmer

LECTURER in Practical Agriculture, University of California, 1879–91; Assistant Professor of Agriculture, 1891–97; Professor of Agricultural Practice and Superintendent of Agricultural Extension, 1897–1907; Dean of the College of Agriculture and Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, 1907–1913. Skillful organizer and communicator, all-round generalist, beloved teacher. Editor of the *Pacific Rural Press* for nearly 50 years, Wickson also authored *The California Fruits and How to Grow Them* (1889: nine editions), *The California Vegetables in Garden and Field* (1898: five editions), *Rural California* (1923); and many other publications.⁷

From the left:

Benjamin I. Wheeler

President
University of California

David S. Jordan

President
Stanford University

Edward J. Wickson

Dean, School of Agriculture
University of California

Photograph taken
at a State Farm Picnic Day
circa 1910

(UCD Special Collections
Department Photograph)

