

Thomas S. Hawkins. - The leading spirit of San Benito county, the man above all others to whom the community looks in matters of public moment, who for years has been its acknowledged leader, whose advice is sought and opinion respected in all questions of importance, is Thomas S. Hawkins, president of the bank of Hollister.

Born in Marion county, Missouri, in the year 1836, Mr. Hawkins is now in his fifty-fifth year. His early life was passed on a farm, and despite the disadvantages surrounding young men in Missouri fifty years ago, he managed to secure a good education. Laboring on the farm until sixteen years of age, he attended a local school, teaching in the meanwhile some of the younger pupils.

In 1860 he turned his steps to the West. Accompanied by his wife and infant son, he, with some neighbors, successfully made the long journey across the plains, and attracted by the fertility of the Santa Clara valley he located there and engaged in the occupation of farming. He remained there until 1867, and by economy and good management found himself in vastly improved circumstances. In 1868 the San Justo Homestead Association was organized, having for its object the subdivision of a portion of the San Justo rancho, in Monterey county. Although but thirty-two years of age, Mr. Hawkins was the leading spirit in this gigantic task, and the prosperous town of Hollister, with its surrounding fertile farms, now mark the result of their labor. Arriving on the ground before the town was laid out, he secured two of the subdivisions, amounting to 340

acres, immediately adjoining the town site on the south. As the village commenced to grow, by skillful management in the disposal of lots he directed its growth toward his land, and soon one ranch of 170 acres was disposed of at a great advance, and a portion of the other was also on the market. With the money thus realized he, with others, founded the Bank of Hollister, in 1873. Chosen to be its first president, he has retained the position ever since. This institution has been a powerful factor in the development of the resources of the county of San Benito. In the organization of the county, which was cut off from Monterey county in 1874, Mr. Hawkins was one of the most influential and indefatigable workers. Since then his position as a foremost man in the community has never been assailed.

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