



In 1890, the Big Dry Creek Flume and Irrigation Company was formed by pioneer families Sample, Letcher, Heiskell, Miller and Davis. They built an earthen dam on Stevenson Creek, created a lake, built a box flume with a V-flume above it that would carry water and lumber from Shaver to Tollhouse.



Rocky Point, just below today's Highway 168 about 100 feet below the "Four Lanes".

The flume ran a total of 50+ miles (a record then) eventually to Clovis. Early on it went only to Toll House.



Flume Tender's Cabin
C. 1900



In 1891, the flume was sold to Frank Bullard and others from Yolo County. It was reorganized under the name Fresno Flume and Irrigation. In 1892, Michigan lumbermen, L.P. Swift and C.B. Shaver and local pioneers, Bullard, Musick, Butler and Colson purchased the project. Shaver and his brother-in-law Swift built a sawmill adjacent to the dam. Freight wagons, pulled by 36 horses, were used to transport mill equipment up Tollhouse Road. The steepest section required heavy equipment to be moved by block and tackle. Tollhouse Road was aptly named "the beast killer."

As told by "Colonel" Smutz, Special Correspondent in the *Fresno Weekly Republican* October 7, 1992:

"At the dam site I found J Bedford of Fresno acting as under superintendent George Wright, master mason and A H Brown foreman of the rock crew . C B Shaver is the superintendent of construction on the flume.There are about 150 men working on the Flume. The water moves at a rate of 10 feet per second from the head of the flume down to Big Dry Creek, from there to Toll House at about thirty nine feet per second. In some places on the line of the flume the work is so hazardous, men are let down steep cliffs or ropes in order to do the drilling and place the blasting material."

A dozen flume-tender houses (connected with a single telephone line) were placed along the flume route to relay any problems. The men would use a pickaroon (a pole with a straight spike on the end with a crook beneath) to release any lumber "jams" as they walked on the 16-inch catwalk.



Ponderosa Pine
"pinus ponderosa"