

Basic Detail Report



Boom Busted

Date

c. 1888

Medium

Photographic print

Description

Mounted photograph titled "Boom Busted" depicting a large crowd in front of the Santa Ana train station in 1888. The crowds appear to be rushing away from the station, with some finding transportation on horse-drawn buggies and coaches. The events shown in this photo are the result of economic fluctuations during the establishment of Los Angeles and Orange County in the 1880s. Following the Recession of 1882-1885, the Santa Fe Railroad began building its way into Southern California where rail travel had previously been monopolized by the Southern Pacific Railroad. The competition between the two companies led to a significant drop in fares, sometimes as low as \$1 for a trip from the midwest. Around the same time, enterprising individuals began settling into and promoting the newly formed Los Angeles County. These factors led to a real estate and investment boom as thousands flocked to the area's fertile farmland and Mediterranean climate. As Los Angeles continued to grow in the mid-1880s developers continued to expand outward, but as time went on it became evident that the boomtowns that were to become Orange County were not receiving enough resources to support their rapidly growing population and citrus industry. In 1888, Orange County was officially separated from Los Angeles County, and the subsequent transition caused the County's newly unsupported economy to "bust." The effects of the bust branched outward across the developing area, eventually contributing to the Recession of 1890. Of the 100 or so new towns planned in Southern California between 1884-1888, many of them were stunted and eventually abandoned as a result of the bust, leaving behind the "Ghost Towns" that are a common sight for today's SoCal road trippers. What we see in this photograph is likely the ubiquitous rush to the banks as consumers raced to withdraw their investments before they lost too much value. Santa Ana was established as the seat of the newly formed County, so it likely had the largest banks with the greatest stores of cash available to withdraw. However, scenes similar to this one probably also occurred in the cities of Anaheim and Orange.

Dimensions

5 1/4 × 8 1/2 in. (13.3 × 21.6 cm)