

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Tres Pinos and Hollister**

In the '50's and 60's the town nearest to the New Idria Mines was San Juan, 68 miles away. The stage route between them became a well-traveled road livened with the jangle of bells and worn by the freight teams. From six to 12 horses, or mules constituted one of these teams. The driver sat on the wheel horse and guided the team by means of a jerk line fastened to the bit of one of the lead horses. Of course, we did not see this means of transportation on our recent trip to Idria, nor were we annoyed by traffic of any kind. After traveling a few miles out of Hollister we probably saw a dozen or so cars and the drivers of these were not speeders, so the peacefulness and quietness of the rolling hills, covered with grass and wild flowers, remained with us throughout the day.

The road to the mine follows San Carlos Creek down to Griswold Creek, named for a rancher who somehow eked out an existence in the region that is still called Griswolds. We passed several adobe houses a few of which stand vacant as wrecks beside the road, and also a few cabins constructed of rough lumber, also vacant and forlorn. Next, we came to Panoche Creek which runs through the Panoche Valley, famous for cattle pasture.

The Tres Pinos Creek, which we crossed and recrossed by means of fords, has long been known as "wiggletail." The roadbed of today has been somewhat improved and, or a part of the distance, is now cut out of the canyon side at a higher level. There is much improvement being carried on at present by the county highway department, but all detours and old roads are easily driven over. However, few bridges have been built, and it is still necessary to ford the streams in several places, all of which is a peasant experience.

Finally, the village that was known as Tres Pinos, or Paicines, was reached, and the remainder of the journey to San Juan was on a more even grade.

Tres Pinos or Paicines as it is known today is little more than a post office and a general store. It stands at the junction of the Pinnacles Road and the Hollister-New Idria Road. This spot used to be called Tres Pinos, named for three-stunted pine trees that grew near there on the bank of Tres Pinos Creek.

The early history of the county tells us that when the railroad was built from Hollister, to a point west of the original settlement of Tres Pinos, a town grew up at the Station and it also was called Tres Pinos. After a time, the new settlement came to be known as Paicines, for Rancho Cienega de Los Paicines in its vicinity. The word itself is supposed to be the name of a tribe of Indians that once lived in the region.

The town of Hollister also has an interesting history. In the autumn of 1868, the San Justo Homestead Assn. was formed by a group of 50 farmers, who each held one share in the association. They purchased from Col. W. W. Hollister the eastern part of Rancho San Justo, containing 1,000 acres, for the sum of \$400,000 (?) and divided the best part of the land into 50 homestead lots - one for each member. One hundred acres in the middle was reserved for a townsite and was laid out in blocks, lots, and streets. This acreage is now the center of Hollister.

The book "Historic Spots in California," tells us that because it seemed a waste of time to go all the way to the coast to transact legal business at the county seat in Monterey, the suggestion of forming a new county met with approval. Agitation of the subject resulted in the organization of San Benito County on Feb. 12, 1874, with the new town of Hollister as the county seat.

A stop at San Juan with a tour of the Mission and of the several State Historical Monuments which circle the Plaza, should be a must of this motor journey through San Benito County.