

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 30, 1960

### **A Dream Come True**

"The Monterey-San Luis Obispo stretch of road, now a link in Highway 1, is without doubt the most spectacular and awe inspiring highway in the United States, perhaps in the world," wrote the late Dr. John L. D. Roberts, known as the father of this Carmel-San Simeon highway that is today a lasting tribute to his foresight and perseverance.

This now famous ocean dirt road was first mapped by Dr. Roberts, when as a young man he rode its trail by mustang, by night and by day, bringing medical care to the widely scattered residents of a section that has been the scene of many thrilling adventures, crimes and shipwrecks. And with the opening of the highway in June of 1937, Dr. Roberts realized a dream come true after 35 years of waiting and constant effort.

It was from his most intimate contacts with this region that Dr. Roberts was inspired to promote and father this now famous road; and it is from that same intimate contact that he recorded a sketch of the scenes and people of the district, revived in his memory from the days of his active practice as a doctor beginning 73 years ago; Dr. Roberts having come to Monterey in 1887. A copy of his history came into the hands of Cortland Hill, who, until a few months ago, owned large acreage down the coast, and he in turn presented a copy to us.

"More than 70 years ago, commencing at the top of Carmel Hill at the entrance of the historic 17 Mile Drive of the old P.I.Co., (often called the Poor Irish Co.) lived the keeper, Joe Hitchcock and family, and also was located the buffalo ranch, managed by Winston Bros., where Pebble Beach is today. The Murphy's ranch adjoined among white sand dunes. This Murphy and Escolle property is today Carmel City or Carmel-by-the-Sea. This town was acquired and laid out as a village by Mr. Santiago Duckworth in 1890 and later became the property of Messrs. Powers and Deffendorf," Dr. Roberts wrote.

Here on the Escolle ranch Ernest Michaels opened and operated a brick and tile plant with Spotted John, as keeper. The next ranch belonged to John Martin and family and was close to the home of Carmel Martin, now one of Monterey's most prominent attorneys. The

old Carmel Mission with its keepers, the Silva family, came next and was followed by the big Canada de la Segunda Ranch, operated by Messrs. Hatton and Ollason and a brother-in-law John Hanney. In later years this ranch became the Hatton property and on part of it is now located Hatton Fields and the Carmel High School.

"At this point," Dr. Roberts writes, "we now cross the Carmel River over which there was no bridge in those days and you either swam it, drowned, or remained on its bank when it was at flood" both of which he had often done. On the south side of the Carmel River was the San Jose Y Sur Chiquita ranch or grant and Mr. Gregg and his family and John Sparolini lived there. The Brazil and Silva homes adjoined. This property is now the location of the Monastery. All these places were between the Carmel River and San Jose Creek which formerly formed a lake each year through which all travelers forded the waters to reach the next family, Dr. Roberts recalls.

The land owned by Rafael Serrano and a saloon kept by Mike Artellan became a part of Point Lobos that together with several hundred acres for settlers was acquired by the firm of Bassett & Emery. These very enterprising gentlemen, according to Dr. Roberts, sold to Ernest Michaels of Old Monterey, about 100 acres of land and on this Michaels laid out and filed for a record map called Carmelita. This map donated to the County of Monterey the 16 acre point that contains the famous cypress grove of Pt. Lobos, as a public park. Messrs. Bassett and Emery, who bought up that portion of the grant known as San Jose and Sur Chiquita tried to stretch the same as far south as Little Sur river. They were foiled in this attempt by the many farmers and especially Towle, who had already located, and by the decision of the courts. The Bassett and Emery holdings was confined to north of the Wild Cat Gulch.