

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Along The Coast Road

The firm of Bassett and Emery acquired a coal mine located about one mile inland up Coal Mine Gulch, Dr. John L. D. Roberts, doctor and former County Supervisor, wrote 70 years ago in a short history of the land along Highway 1 and its owners. He also expressed the opinion that this highway was without a doubt the most spectacular and awe-inspiring scenic highway in the United States, perhaps the world.

The firm of Bassett and Emery organized a company of interested Monterey citizens, mortgaged all their holdings, and proceeded to develop the coal mine by building a chute to load vessels, a railroad to the mine to haul its products and to open up the mine to a fair grade of soft, blacksmith coal; that soon petered out. With no more coal to sell, the firm's entire venture was a sad failure and a serious loss to many, especially the promoters who lost all their land to mortgage holders. The Carmelita town site also was a failure and the map cancelled by the Board of Supervisors, with the exception of the park and the 50 foot road leading to the park. This property acquired by A. M. Allen and company by sale of mortgages. After Mr. Allen's death 600 acres were acquired from his daughters, Mrs. Helen Burnett, Mrs. T. F. Riley and Mrs. Margaret Hudson, and from his widow, Mrs. Florence Allen, by the State Park Commission. It is now Point Lobos State Park.

Adjoining the Bassett and Emery holding is the Highlands Inn. Here is really the beginning of the scenic value of what is now the Carmel-San Simeon highway. Next to this property came the home of the Towle family on the north side of Malpaso, and on the south side lived Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe who owned several hundred acres. When Thorpe died he was buried on the ranch, according to Dr. Robert's notes. This property was later sold to Joe Victorine. This was also a proposed town site.

As we travel down the coast road next in line was the Doud family and their ranch on the north side of Double Gulch, and then came the well know E. Sobarenes family. The adjoining lands of Aran Kesler was later sold to the old and respected Solzion family. The Olmstead, Starrett and Sweetman families lived a bit inland on Long Ridge dividing Garrapatos Creek from Palo Colorado Canyon where we next find the Al Cushman

family land, later owned by Corbet Grimes. Up this canyon, the old well-known Murray family lived.

Here also in 1887 the Nottley brothers operated a large plant. They shipped sawed lumber, shakes, shingles, railroad ties and post, and vast quantities of tan-bark over a chute into ocean going vessels. This place was known as Notley's Landing, but today (1960) it is difficult for even an old timer to recognize the location of the landing. Prominent among the many men employed there was the late Sam Trotter, manager and foreman for many years.

The next ranch south was owned by Ed Jones. It was later acquired by Dick Smith and still later by the Smith heirs, who named it Westmere.

John Gilky and family lived still farther south at Rocky Cree. When Dr. Roberts made his recording, Rainbow Lodge at Bixby Creek and canyon was owned and operated by the Sharp family. Later, Gallatin Powers had restaurant there. At this Bixby Creek Canyon there was much activity. Charles Bixby and his associate, McClland, built and operated a sawmill and shipped vast quantities of lumber, shakes and shingles, railroad ties, trench posts and tan-oak bark all over a chute to steamers. This firm employed many men and many families lived there. Also as permanent residents there lived the Fassil, Hoge and Gregg families. There was also a well attended school. Associated with this lumbering firm was the very enterprising Ernest Michaels, Monterey County's Justice of the Peace.

This Bixby company failed and later was formed a company that installed a large lime kiln works and shipped over an aerial cable line a mile long above the same water chute, to ocean vessels at the foot of Bixby Canyon.

Going up the hill from the canyon the first residence was the Heath ranch, later owned by the Brazil family. After leaving Heath's, Dr. Roberts recalls, the coast traveler reached the top of the Sierra Hill and there lived John Hitchcock on his large ranch. That formerly was the home of the large and well known Ingham family. Next came the Abbott family and close by the Jack Howland family. On the way down the hill one passed the Cunningham, the Romery and the Beebe family. It was at the top of the Serra Hill, just west of the Howlands, that Billy Hansen was shot twice through the head while he slept in his bed. This shooting was the result of land squatters and grabbers at the Little Sur

rivers and its branches, the north and south forks, where many settlers had come and taken up homesteads.

Among the early settlers along the Little Sur were the Gayety family, the Howlands and Joseph Gschwend family. Up the north fork lived Jim Kelliher, who with Harry Green in 1889 – 1890 dammed up the creek, made a lake and power plant and started a sawmill. The venture, like all the others, came to grief, failure and loss. Dr. Roberts has a cabin built from the first lumber.