

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 4, 1962

### **A Trip To Tassajara**

During the Summer of 1901 John Morrow of Santa Cruz and his wife started out from that city a 6:30 a.m. with Dolly Horse pulling the surrey, to drive to Tassajara Springs for a vacation of a couple of weeks. He wrote back to The Sentinel telling the editor of their safe arrival and giving an interesting description of the road, the scenery, the flowers, wild life and the streams they crossed and recrossed as well as the menus for numerous breakfasts, luncheons, dinners and camps along the way.

The original letters now are in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Lawton Hughes of San Francisco as they appeared in the Santa Cruz Sentinel. The letters were written by Mr. Hughes' grandfather 61 years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Beck of Tassajara Springs have kindly sent me photostat copies of the original letters.

The first day out, Mr. and Mrs. Morrow stopped to eat lunch and rest an hour a few miles south of Watsonville. The entire distance traveled that day was one continual hay crop and fruit orchard, with once in a while a thrifty field of beets. After entering the Salinas Valley, they found steam threshers at work on both sides of the road.

After spending the flight with Mrs. Jeffery Granger in Salinas, the travelers crossed the Salinas River on the big iron bridge and followed up Toro Creek about eight miles over level, but slightly sandy road. The scattering timber here Morrow described as mostly sycamore and buckeye and some large oaks. They finally reached the point where the road to Tassajara leaves the road to Monterey, which is 10 miles distant and nearly due south.

After winding around the mountain road, they finally reached the summit between Toro Valley and the Carmel River. At this point, Morrow wrote that they had a fine view of the Salinas Valley and Toro Creek Valley clear up to Mr. Galespa. In this Valley they could see a number of ranches and a neat white schoolhouse nestling among the large, spreading oaks. On reaching the summit they had a fine view of the famous and almost sacred Carmel Valley.

"The old padres had a happy way of giving Bible names to all beautiful places," noted Mr. Morrow, "and how

appropriate it was that they should give this historically beautiful, if not hallowed, name to this lovely river and valley, for who has not heard of Mt. Carmel as mentioned in the holy writ?"

Continuing, the travelers came to the Carmel River after descending the grade and traveled many miles before they reached Jamesburg. "This ... burg, consists of a house and barn, with a post office attachment. All along this road are stock ranches with plenty of cattle and horses. Some hay is raised there, but not much else."

They camped that night on the Lewis ranch, a lovely, romantic, out-of-the-way place. They had traveled that day 38 miles over a most beautiful and interesting country, which is well worth the trip to see, was the opinion of Mr. Foster.

Remember, dear reader, these early vacationers were moving slowly along by horse and carriage and taking their time to really appreciate the beauty of the country. Today the speed of the automobile does not allow for the observation of the beauty of the scenery, which is free before the motorist, but they get to destination a bit sooner than the traveler of 1901 got to the famous Tassajara Springs.

"The next morning we were up at 5 o'clock feeding the horse and cooking breakfast and getting ready for a start, for we now had a seven-mile mountain to go up and quite a steep grade too, but this was only a beginning to 15 miles of about as wild and rough a piece of grand old mountain scenery as I have ever had the pleasure to see. Last summer I was in the heart of the Sierras, but now I am in the heart of the Monterey mountains and I find much here that is grand, beautiful, and wonderful, as well as in the Sierra." (Quoting Mr. Morrow.)

"We left camp at 6:30 and began to climb the seven-mile grade to the summit of the mountain, which divides the headwaters of the Carmel River from the headwaters, of the Arroyo Seco River, which runs east and empties into the Salinas River near Soledad.

"I will leave ourselves, climbing this mountain, the summit of which is 4,960 feet above sea level, and after we have gained the summit and rested, I may write some more and try to describe still more the wonders and grandeur of these majestic old mountains."

(Signed) John Morrow,  
July 25th, 1901.