

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Pt. Lobos City**

I wonder how many residents of the Peninsula know that there once was a plan to build a town at the shore end of Point Lobos on Carmelo Bay, as well as a connecting railroad to a coal mine up in Malpaso Canyon.

It was to have been known as Carmelito or Point Lobos City, according to a map of May 29, 1891, on file in the assessor's office in Salinas. Streets were named with numbers for the east to west ones and names for cross streets: Kathrine, Bay View, Emery, Bassett, Eddie, Alice, Doble, Barrett, Anna and San Jose.

The main shaft of the coal mine is still on the property of Mrs. Julian Burnett of Los Altos. Mrs. Burnett is the former Helen Allen, daughter of the late A.M. Allen, owner of the property.

An illustrated folder given all visitors to Point Lobos Reserve State Park states:

"Point Lobos, escaping almost miraculously from the destruction of native landscape values that occurred around it, passing from owner to owner who regarded it lightly – once in the free and easy days of the Mexican regime lost as the stake in a game of cards – site of a whaling station, shipping point for a coal mine, laid out on paper as a townsite with its harsh gridiron of streets, grazed over by cattle, occasionally burned – this rare and exceptional landscape was finally acquired by an owner who fully appreciated its magnificence, and when it passed into the trusteeship of the State of California in 1933, still held most of its essentially primitive character. It still holds the more fragile things – the spell, the mystery, the beauty of the site."

Coal was discovered in the hills in back of Ranch San Jose & Sur Chiquito, and in 1888 all the claimants, except Gregg and the squatters, formed the Carmel Land and Coal Co. A.M. Allen, a contractor building race tracks for Emery and Bassett, who had coal mining experience, came to work the mine. The coal, soft grade with many impurities, was transported out of the hills by teams and wagons to the bay, where a large coal bunker loaded waiting ships.

A whaling station was set up in a bay near Point Lobos in 1861. A watch was maintained on a nearby hill. When a spout was sighted, a flag was raised. Boats would set

from the bay, harpoon the whale if they could and tow it to shore. Then people who worked at the whaling station, most of them local squatters, cut off the fat and boiled it down in huge iron kettles.

The whaling business still flourished in the 1880's and a few local residents can still remember seeing whales harpooned in Carmel Bay.

In 1902 Mr. Allen started the first abalone cannery in the United States on the shore of Point Lobos Bay. Japanese divers brought in the abalone; some was dried and shipped to Japan. Later, they canned it and shipped it to San Francisco for the retail trade.

About this time, Mr. Allen owned about 20 cows and made Monterey Jack cheese. People were accustomed to walk out from Carmel to buy the cheese. Aged cheese was sent to San Francisco.

Mr. Noel Stevenson, a new resident of the Peninsula, has sent this story written by David Starr Jordan in 1880 as a report to the United States Census Bureau and now in the California Section Information Index on Monterey County:

"Of all the indentations on the coast of California, the most picturesque and charming is the little bay of Carmel, which lies just south of the point of Los Pinos, between this point and the rocky cape of Los Lobos, its blue waters sheltered from the northwest traders by the pine-clad peninsula which ends in the reefs of the 'Point of Pines.' No one lives on this bay at the present except a farmer or two, a little colony of Chinese fishermen who have a 'pescadero' or fishing camp in the edge of the pines and a little group of Portuguese (Captain Verisimo) who watch for whales on the rocky ledge near Point Lobos. (Signed) David Starr Jordan (1880)."