

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 16, 1966

More About Dani Family

After the hard times of the 1870's, times began to get better for the Dani family down the coast. They had a garden planted and Mr. Dani worked in the harvest in the summer after putting in a crop at home, leaving Mrs. Dani and the children to care for it.

He acquired some goats for milk and meat and later got some cows. He built a tall smokehouse, and they smoked their own bacon, and made sausages from the hogs they had fattened. He made enough to sell so he packed it over the mountain and sold it in Salinas.

Mr. Dani lost his left arm while working in the harvest. He got it mangled in a threshing machine and had to have it amputated just below the shoulder. Mrs. Lopez took Mrs. Dani over the mountain and she went by stagecoach the rest of the way to Lompoc. As soon as he was better she came back to the children.

After Mr. Dani got hurt, he took up peddling and traveled over the southern part of the state. The children and Mrs. Dani worked on the ranch and they managed to put in and harvest the crops. He peddled books, notions, etc.

When one of the boys was about 14 years old, he would travel over the mountain to Jolon to get the mail for the Lime Kiln Company, which started up about that time. He also had to plow and help do the ranch work as his father could not do it with only one arm. Dani went to San Francisco about every year and chartered a boat to bring supplies to the whole neighborhood.

One of the daughters, Jane, married William Twitchel, after getting acquainted with him when he came to work at the Lime Kilns. The couple went to Templeton to live.

Ada Dani married Wilber Harlan who had taken up a homestead on the coast. Gradually the family got smaller; Alvin married Mary Ellen Pfeiffer, who died leaving two children.

He later married her sister, Kate Pfeiffer. Riel married Fredricka Welker, a schoolteacher. After her death, he later married Josie Boronda. Mary married Nes Swending, and they lived on the coast for a time. Another daughter married William Pfeiffer and they

also lived along the coast. Anthony married Eliza Hidalgo and Sipriana Lopez, respectively.

Mr. and Mrs. Dani's house was the center of activities and fun for her grandchildren. Many good times never to be forgotten were had there.

As Mr. Dani's health was bad and as he was failing, in 1905 the family that was left, Mr. and Mrs. Dani, Lucia and John moved to San Lucas. Lucia remained behind for a while to look after the Lucia post office, named for her, until someone else could look after it.

Mr. Dani died in June 1908 at the age of 76 and was buried in San Lucas. In 1909, Mrs. Dani and Lucia went to England on a visit with her sister living there.

In 1912 they moved to Monterey as Mrs. Dani's health was not good. Alvin Dani had bought a house for her here, so that his mother would be nearer to him. He lived at Little Sur. Mrs. Dani died in February 1931 at the age of 95 years and six months.

This is a story of a brave and good family, who helped to make history in the Big Sur county down the southern coast and there are many others, who took up government land, worked hard under difficult conditions which not many of us today would like or stick with it, as many years as did Mr. and Mrs. Dani and their family.