

CARMEL VALLEY HISTORIAN

Laureles Grade: An Old Cattle Route Turned Scenic Highway

By Elizabeth Barratt, CVHS Historian

Carmel Valley old-timer Joe Hitchcock (1881-1969) claimed that local lore said Laureles Grade was laid out and built by a Chinese work crew under Andrew Jackson Ougheltree (1823-1911). The owner of Rancho los Tularcitos from 1866-1879, Ougheltree was a stock raiser who apparently needed the route to drive his cattle over to Rancho Laguna Seca. He sold Rancho los Tularcitos in 1879 to Alberto Trescony.

The grade was still a rugged route during Joe Hitchcock's youth in the 1890s. As he described it, "Around mid-August it was time for the annual cattle drive to the stubble fields in Salinas. The cattle would be gathered and driven over the grade to Laguna Seca. The chuck wagon followed and it took two days to reach the Conlan Ranch. One rider would be left in Salinas to watch over the cattle."

In the summer of 1898, he drove a herd of 83 horses over the grade to the Hebron Ranch, a trip that took three hours. In October 1898, Joe was the designated cattle drive rider who remained for watch duty in Salinas. He was there until mid-November, when the cattle were driven back over the grade to their Carmel Valley ranch pastures.

Cattle drives during inclement weather were a special burden. "I have driven that Grade in a four-horse wagon, spring wagon and buggy, to say nothing of the

times I have ridden horseback over it helping to drive 1500-2000 head of cattle to and from the stubble fields of Salinas. Many times it was rainy weather or else heavy dust before the roads were oiled. During heavy weather little culverts or bridges were washed out and anyone returning [to Carmel Valley] had to leave their wagons and lead their horses to the haven of Los Laureles Ranch. They would remain there until temporary repairs were made and their wagons could get across the wash."

Today, drivers who proceed along the scenic route would not recognize Joe Hitchcock's description from over a century ago. Work to widen and realign parts of Laureles Grade road began in November 1955 on the Carmel Valley side. The stretch was described as "starting at the Fleming Ranch and continuing to the Donald MacDonald property at the top of the Grade." The portion covered about 2-1/4 miles of new road construction.

To straighten out one particularly sharp curve, the county purchased five acres of the MacDonald property at the top of the grade. Widening and resurfacing, with the elimination of many small curves, was intended to make the drive not only safer but more comfortable for drivers. The ensuing roadwork closed down the Grade to all traffic for the duration of the project.

(see Laureles Grade page 4)



A bulldozer cuts the gap at the summit of Laureles Grade
Photo courtesy Tom Augustitis

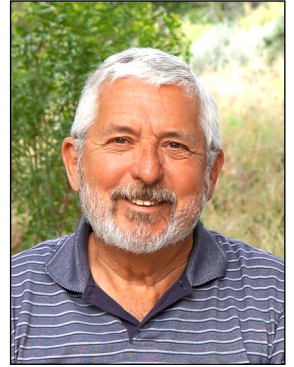
A Message from the President, Kim Williams

Lots has been happening here at the History Center. Since the Farmer's Market has been moved to our parking lot, we are now open on Sundays from 11 to 2 o'clock through September. This has significantly increased the number of History Center visitors.

Thanks to the CV Kiwanis, the back deck has been enclosed and is ready for some large display items.

Coming up October 29th is our annual fundraiser **Party in the Village!** *The California Cowboys with Bobby Black* and Carmel Valley's own *Bruce Foreman's Cow Bop* will provide a lot of great music. Come dance the night away.

At our next Annual Membership Meeting on March 11, we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary. Save the date now for a very special celebration to recognize this milestone.



Kim Williams

Volunteer Activities



Photos by
Jeff Ohlson

Above: Mike Thatcher, Gary Tate and Fernando Morgadinho are ready to start working on the project.

Above Right: Jeff Markow, Gary Tate and Chuck McKay check out the gate.

Right: The finished project.

Not shown: Mike Williams

The History Center's Back Deck Enclosed

Recently the back deck at the History Center was enclosed to make way for some large exhibit items. The Carmel Valley Kiwanis came to the rescue and completed the project in just one day. ***Thank you Kiwanis!***



Marketing Committee News

By Cherie Ohlson

A newly-formed Marketing Committee held its first meeting in May. Its overall purpose is to create and implement a plan to promote the efforts of the Society in the preservation and display of Carmel Valley's unique history and heritage. It's going to be a fun & interesting challenge for members Julie Cason, Dave Terdy and Cherie Ohlson. Still in the formative stage, you'll read more about its activities in future newsletters.

In the meantime, the committee has been working on an opinion survey you'll read about below. Kudos to new Board Member Julie Cason for spearheading this effort. She has done a great job of gathering input from multiple sources and crafting a series of questions designed to give the Board solid facts and data for its decision-making about future exhibits and activities of interest to the membership. We sincerely hope you will take the time to complete this short survey as we need and value your opinion, and sincerely appreciate your time in helping us shape the direction of the Society.



Photo by Jeff Ohlson

Ruth (Tregea) Hardisty proudly points to her family's ranch location on the History Center's map while also checking to assure their brand was displayed in the exhibit. Her parents John and Kathryn Tregea established their 10,000-acre **Rancho Palo Escrito (Tregea Ranch)** in 1948. Tregea family members still enjoy a portion of the ranch. A majority of the ranch was sold in the 1990s. While at the History Center, Ruth recalled her first view of Carmel Valley: upon crossing the Laureles Grade there were no lights visible in all of the Valley.

Exhibit Committee News!

By Andy Case

Most recently we moved the Cub Scout exhibit to the Village Library. It is great to have show live on in a new venue. We hope you can visit the library to see it.

Next in line at the History Center is a new geology exhibit at the Center. It will interpret and explore the formation of Carmel Valley from millions of years ago. It will feature fossils, various rocks and even glass models of marine diatoms made by local artist Alan Masaoka.

Further down the line is a plan to expand on the geology exhibit and interpret the history of our very special Carmel River watershed. We are collaborating with Garland Park Staff as they are planning a similar theme and we want to complement each other.

Stand by for some interesting new exhibits!



CVHS SURVEY

By Julie Cason

As we approach our 30th anniversary and start planning for the next 30 years, the Carmel Valley Historical Society is entering a planning phase. We value the experiences, insights, and ideas of our members and friends, so we've created an online survey that will only take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Just visit www.carmelvalleyhistoricalsociety.org and click on the link at the top of the page. You will be redirected to a free survey tool called Typeform. At the end of the survey, you can enter a raffle for your choice of one of the Society's Carmel Valley history books. Thank you for taking a few minutes to help us plan for the future of preserving our past! Please note that the survey closes on September 30th, so please go online soon.

(Laureles Grade from page 1)

As the process began, Joe Hitchcock reminisced, "One of the curves that was eliminated was the scene of a friendly watering trough where the tired, trudging teams had the chance of a cool drink of water to refresh themselves. Inside the fence was another trough where the range stock watered. Hidden nearby was an old pick and shovel and it was one of the fence rider's chores to keep the trough clean and the water flowing steadily. There, too, motorists filled their radiators if they were getting too hot. The old mule and wagon trail thus gives way to a new look in traffic safety and convenience," he concluded.

The firm of Jess H. Harrison of San Ardo was awarded the contract for the Carmel Valley phase. The road-way was shut down for work on Monday, November 14, 1955 and the job completed by Saturday, June 23, 1956.

Eager crowds gathered to celebrate the ribbon cutting ceremony that would reopen the much-missed travel route. The Salinas and Carmel Valley Chambers of Commerce arranged observances at a point halfway between the top of Laureles Grade and Carmel Valley Road. Besides Monterey County, Salinas and Carmel Valley officials and organizations, Rudy the Clown from the Shrine-Polack Brothers Circus made an appearance. After the Manuel Campos Group provided music and colorful dances, everyone flocked to the Carmel Valley Inn (now Bernardus Lodge) to enjoy a barbecue.



On July 20, 1957 Monterey County Supervisor Burt Talcott cuts a ribbon to inaugurate the rerouted north section of Laureles Grade. On his left is Dr. Edward Marcucci, a leader in promoting the new scenic route. Photo courtesy CV Historical Society

By late October, 1956, the American Engineering and Construction Company of Vallejo, under resident engineer Red Shaw, began construction on the Salinas side of the grade. In this phase, the old summit was extended through to a new summit designed to follow along a ridge top before descending to join the old Grade road just north of its junction with Robley Road. One result of the complete realignment meant the route was one-half to three quarters of a mile shorter on the Salinas side. By following the ridge above the former road, the newly designed route also offered scenic vistas with sweeping views.

This more extensive phase took longer, but the road was not closed during construction. On July 20, 1957, with the job completed, another ceremony marked the occasion. Monterey County Supervisor (later United States Congressman) Burt Talcott cut the ceremonial ribbon. Final grade improvement phases, including paving, sealcoating and additional realignment, were finished in April 1960.

The driving public now had a safer trip, and the new, improved route became a scenic corridor opening onto vistas of hills, oak trees, valleys, the Monterey Bay and the spreading Salinas Valley.

Added status came nearly a decade later, when on October 1, 1969, the Laureles Grade route was designated the State of California's first county scenic road. State and county officials attended the ceremony, held at the grade, and followed in typical Carmel Valley style by a barbecue held at the Trail and Saddle Club.

Upcoming Event! CATTLE BRANDING IN CARMEL VALLEY

"Cattle Branding in Carmel Valley" is the subject of the Carmel Valley Library's First Saturday Series on September 3rd, at 10 o'clock. This presentation is co-sponsored by CVHS. Local rancher Steve Dorrance, whose family owns and manages a cattle operation on nearby Mt. Toro, and CVHS's Jeff Ohlson will cover all aspects of branding cattle including brand designs and how branding has changed over time. Steve will also weigh the pros & cons of different branding techniques. Branding cattle is indigenous to Carmel Valley and this is a rare opportunity to listen and learn from a pro. See you there!



Financial Contributions (May, June, July)

General Fund: Maxine Callinan, Ruth Hardisty, Jack McKay, Gary Tate

Grants: Carmel Valley Women's Club

In Honor of Sue Pius: Barbara Babcock

Donations: Documents, Photos, Artifacts, Library Materials (May, June, July)

Lou Allaire: 5 boxes of documents pertaining to history of the Carmel Valley Vintage Airfield

Leigh Cecka: February 2004 issue of "Carmel Valley Country" featuring articles on Carmel Valley couples, Klondike Canyon Road, and the Park District's acceptance of a 970 acre Carmel Valley parcel as gift

CTEA: Copy of the book "A History of the Thoroughbred in California"

Cal & Shirley Garner: Various vintage local publications: Carmel Valley Outlook dated December 9th, 1964, Sunday Peninsula Herald Weekend Magazine dated December 7th, 1980, featuring an article on "Building the Coast Road", "Carmel Valley Perspectives" sixth-decade anniversary publishing of the Carmel Valley Association, dated August 2009

Karen Hansen: 1954 Special Edition of Carmel Valley News: including: 64 pictures, articles by Joe Hitchcock & Lillian Bos Ross, profiles of John Kenneth Caldwell, Byington Ford, Irene Hatton, Feg Murray, Jack Swanson, Alex Weygers and others. Notes on schools, churches, organizations, roads, etc.

Steve Hinck: "Folksongs of the Spanish Californians" collected translated and arranged by William J. McCoy, published in 1926 by Sherman, Clay & Co., San Francisco

Steve Hinck: Turquoise blue satin AT&T Jamesburg Earth Station jacket with American flag on sleeve, Newspaper article dated June 24th, 2016 from Carmel Pine Cone regarding sale of Jamesburg Earth Station "Ultimate Man Cave"

Laurie Johnson: Vintage wooden painted sign (28"x45") depicting two elves singing and "Season's Greetings", hung annually during holiday season at Rosie's Cracker Barrel

Forrest & Madge Williams: 1997 Carmel Valley phone directory

Donna Zahn: "Santa Lucia Preserve" Magazine, Volume #4 featuring article on Leslie Dorrance and "Conservation Grazing"

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

The Historian's Time Machine — Then & Now ~ By Jeff Ohlson

The black & white photo below was taken by George T.C. Smith in the mid-1950s which pictures the final era of the historic Hatton Lower Dairy as seen looking east from Highway 1 at the entrance to Carmel Valley Road.

In the early 1880s, the dairy was headquarters for Irish-born William Hatton, who also managed dairy interests for various Carmel Valley ranchers, as well as the Del Monte Dairy at Rancho Los Laureles. The 2,200-acre Hatton Lower Dairy ran 600 head of cattle and for decades the enterprise was considered state of the art in dairy operations. By the early 1960s, the property was sold and the barns and buildings razed to make way for a shopping center at the mouth of the Valley.

As can be seen by the 2016 color photo taken some 60 years later, there has indeed been much development over this time period. The dairy has now been replaced by the now familiar Carmel Rancho Shopping Center and Barnyard Shopping Village. Also, note that the Carmel Valley Road-HWY 1 interchange has been revised to accommodate the greater flow of traffic.



Carmel Valley Historical Society

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 History Center Hours:
 Fridays and Saturdays: 12:00-4:00
 Sundays: 11:00-2:00
 (through September)
 Library: By Appointment

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Cherie Ohlson	Secretary
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Andy Case	
Julie Cason	
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Upcoming Events

Saturday, September 3, 2016
 A talk by Steve Dorrance and Jeff Ohlson
CATTLE BRANDING IN CV
 10:15 am at the CV Library

Thursday, October 20, 2016
 A talk by Gary Breschini
NEW ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS IN CV
 7:00-8:30 p, at the History Center

Saturday, October 29, 2016
PARTY IN THE VILLAGE!
 7-11 pm at Hidden Valley

Saturday, December 3, 2016
CVHS CHRISTMAS PARTY
 3:00-5:00 pm at the History Center

Saturday, March 11, 2017
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & 30th ANNIVERSARY PARTY
 4:00-6:00 PM at the History Center

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Breschini to speak for Archeology Month – October 20, 7:00 PM

October is Archeology Month and, for the third year in a row, we will host a presentation by noted archeologist, Gary Breschini.



Dr. Gary Breschini

For over 40 years Gary, and his wife, Trudy Haversat, have explored, dug, researched and identified local artifacts telling the story of the Esselen and Rumsen Indians – the earliest residents of Carmel Valley. Gary is President of the Monterey County Historical Society, author of The Esselen Indians (2004), and numerous professional papers.

On October 20 we look forward to an intriguing slide presentation and talk – along with time for questions. This year Gary will discuss new archeological finds in the Carmel Valley area as well as the impact of the Sorberanes Fire on fragile local archeological sites.

Elizabeth Barratt is collecting anecdotes and personal histories on **Joe Hitchcock** for a future writing project. If you knew him and have a reminiscence to share, please email her at: hrhandqe3@gmail.com, or phone: 659-2751

Saturday, October 29, 2016 At **HIDDEN VALLEY MUSIC SEMINARS**
 7:00pm - 11:00 pm



Bruce Forman's

COW BOP

with Pinto Pammy!

CV Kiwanis No-Host Bar
 Silent Auction
 Wine & Beer Barrel Raffles

A BENEFIT FOR
 CV Village Improvement Committee
 Carmel Valley Historical Society



Tickets: \$25 Buy Online at partyinthevillage.org