



## Traveling to Tassajara

By Elizabeth Barratt, CVHS Historian



The road leading to Tassajara was fraught with sharp turns and frightened passengers.

(Photo: Monterey County Historical Society)

"A four-horse stage goes over this road and clear through to Salinas every day hauling passengers to the springs safely and without accident, but anyone who rides this route either by stage or their own conveyance will not soon forget it, for it is an exciting, interesting, grand and beautiful ride."

*John Morrow  
Santa Cruz Morning Sentinel, July 31, 1901*

A hot springs spot frequented by local natives for centuries, Tassajara was nearly unknown to outsiders until the early 19th Century. Jack Swan, builder of Monterey's First Theater, wrote of the springs during an 1843 hunting trip in Carmel Valley. He reported coming across a large band of Indians headed for the hot mineral waters to seek a cure for skin rash. In June 1861 Surveyor William Brewer passed by the ar-

ea leading to Tassajara. His travel notes described a high, rugged, rocky mountain area that plunged into a nearly perpendicular canyon with a swift stream flowing along the bottom.

Local newspapers began to publish visitors' descriptions of the remote backwoods spot. By 1869 a wagon road ended 20 miles from the springs, with travelers roughing it on foot or riding a horse over a mountain trail on the last leg. The trek was arduous, but once arrived, visitors willing to rough it would find a primitive structure to stop in, with a nearby abundance of venison and trout and a stream for bathing. It took two days, and sometimes a hired guide, to get to the hot springs through the wilderness.

The wagon road was extended to within 10 miles of Tassajara in 1870. The first stage line between

*(Continued on page 6)*

## A Message from CVHS President Kim Williams

A lot has been happening at the History Center! In addition to beginning work on several new exhibits and displays, we've been making progress on a revision of our bylaws, bringing on new docents at the museum, and recruiting new board members and committee members.

**Election of Board Members:** The Board, acting as the nominating committee, has nominated three members for three-year terms ending in 2025: Jane Chaney, Robin Sutherlin, and reupping for another term, yours truly, Kim Williams.

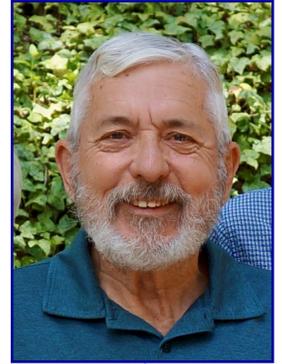
We will also be affirming the election of board members that were confirmed by the Board when we were unable to hold membership meetings due to Covid restrictions. Those members are Christine Williams, for a two-year term ending in 2023; and returning board members Cherie Ohlson, Gary Tate and Dave Terdy, for three-year terms ending in 2024.

Our bylaws also allow for nominations from the membership, so if you would like to nominate yourself or another candidate, it would be helpful if you would send that name to me at [cvhsresident@gmail.com](mailto:cvhsresident@gmail.com) by April 10.

**Bylaws Revision:** We have also been working on updating our bylaws which were last amended in 2010. Thanks to Cherie Ohlson, Sandy Schachter and Christine Williams for a tremendous job reviewing and revising multiple drafts.

We will be voting to affirm the proposed and Board-approved bylaws at the membership meeting on April 24. The proposed bylaws will be available on our website after March 15th. If you would like them mailed or emailed to you, please email me at [CVHSPresident@gmail.com](mailto:CVHSPresident@gmail.com), or call the History Center at 659-5715.

**Volunteers:** We are seeking to recruit new docents and committee members. See the box on the next page for some opportunities to get involved.



*Kim Williams*

## Volunteers in Action / Carmel Valley Good Eggs!



At the annual Christmas Party, CVHS President Kim Williams surprised Jeff and Cherie Ohlson by announcing that they had been selected as 2022 Carmel Valley Good Eggs!

This award, given in recognition of exemplary volunteer service to Carmel Valley Village has been awarded annually since 1953. They will be honored at a banquet at Hidden Valley Music Seminars on April 3rd. To attend (\$50 per person, including beverage) confirm a reservation for the event by email to [cvgoodegg@gmail.com](mailto:cvgoodegg@gmail.com) by March 27.

For more info email: [cvhsresident@gmail.com](mailto:cvhsresident@gmail.com).

## Financial Contributions (Nov, Dec, Jan)

**General Fund:** Jane Chaney, Christian Darken, Steven Dorrance, Margo Fuselier, Chris Harrold, Michael Miller, M.J. Murphy Hardware, Peter Neumeier, Nick & Kathy Nicholson, Jeff & Cherie Ohlson, Val & Jar Pakis, Ken Popovich, Gary & Sheri Tate, Michael Taylor, Sharon Simpson Waller, Kim & Christine Williams, Warren & Penny Wood, and the Community Foundation for Monterey County—The Malcolm and Joan Millard Fund.

**Thank you all for your generous support!**

## Donations: Documents, Photos, Artifacts, Library Materials (Nov, Dec, Jan)

**Marilyn Rose:** 3 matted 9.25 x 7.25 b/w photos of an old '39 Plymouth that was owned by Marilyn Rose's father, taken by local photographer Peter McArthur in front of the gas pumps at Rosie's Cracker Barrel.

**Jodi Schaeffer:** Vintage Publication : "Home Bartender's Guide - Prepared for you by: The Grapevine, Carmel Valley, CA".

**Woodrow "Woody" Ames Estate** (facilitated by Debbie Overall): Painting, watercolor, framed "Californio" by Jack Swanson. This painting of horse and rider was a birthday gift from Jack to his old friend Woody Ames on May 18th, 1973. On the back of the painting Jack noted: "My first watercolor, so observe with tolerance". Jack & Woody continued to be dear friends until Jack's death in 2014.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES — Your Society Needs You!

Volunteers anyone? Where might you like to help? Please leave a message at the History Center (659-5715) or email us (CVHSPresident@gmail.com) listing areas you might like to explore. A society member will contact you to answer questions and help determine where your interests and time availability best fit.

### ♥ Collections Committee:

Sort, organize, and categorize documents and donated items for archives, research and respond to inquiries

### ♥ Exhibits Committee:

Research, help to develop "the story" for high interest exhibits

### ♥ Museum Host/Docent:

Welcome visitors, answer questions, open/close museum, sell books

### ♥ Facility Maintenance:

Periodic cleaning, occasional painting and repairs

### ♥ Landscape Maintenance:

Raking and leaf-blowing, cobweb removal

### ♥ Grant Writing:

Seek grants from various organizations for specific projects and exhibits

### ♥ Board of Directors:

Monitor finances, support fundraising efforts, serve on at least one committee, ensure Society complies with bylaws and policies

## FLASHBACK – THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1969

By Jeff Ohlson, CVHS Historian



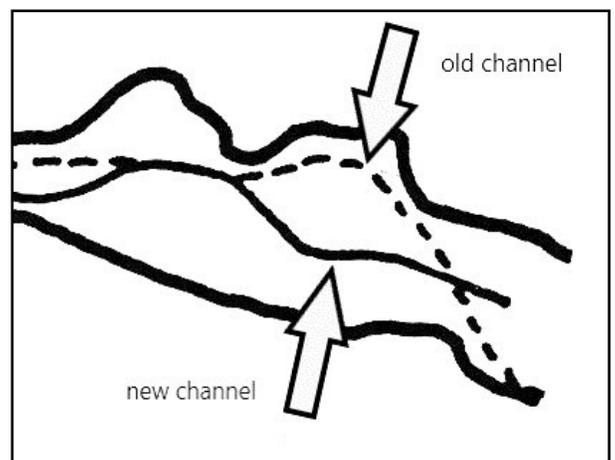
Looking East: Miramonte Road is on the left. The old river channel ran to the right of Miramonte below the bluff. The new Carmel Valley Road and the parking lot for Garland Ranch Regional Park are to the left of the new channel pictured above.

The Carmel River, small and docile, is famously misused and endangered by a watershed scarred by wildfires. During major flood events, however, it becomes a swollen, raging river that wreaks havoc by washing out roads and bridges, flooding homes, and rearranging the area's topography.

One noteworthy flood occurred during the week of January 26, 1969. As seen in the photo above, it washed out a section of the old Carmel Valley Road in the Miramonte area and exposed a section of the water main providing service to Monterey. The bridge to the future Garland Ranch Regional Park can be seen in the lower part of the photo. After a lengthy planning and contract awarding process by the Monterey County Public Works Department, reconstruction efforts started a year after the flood and took until the fall of 1970 to complete. The reconstruction phase affected the daily lives of Valleyites, who were forced to use a 1½ mile winding detour over Miramonte Road **for the better part of 2 years**.

The sketch at right shows where the river channel was relocated to its present-day location. The river's flood plain was filled in with many tons of road fill next to the new road and it is said that old car hulks were used to shore up the river bank.

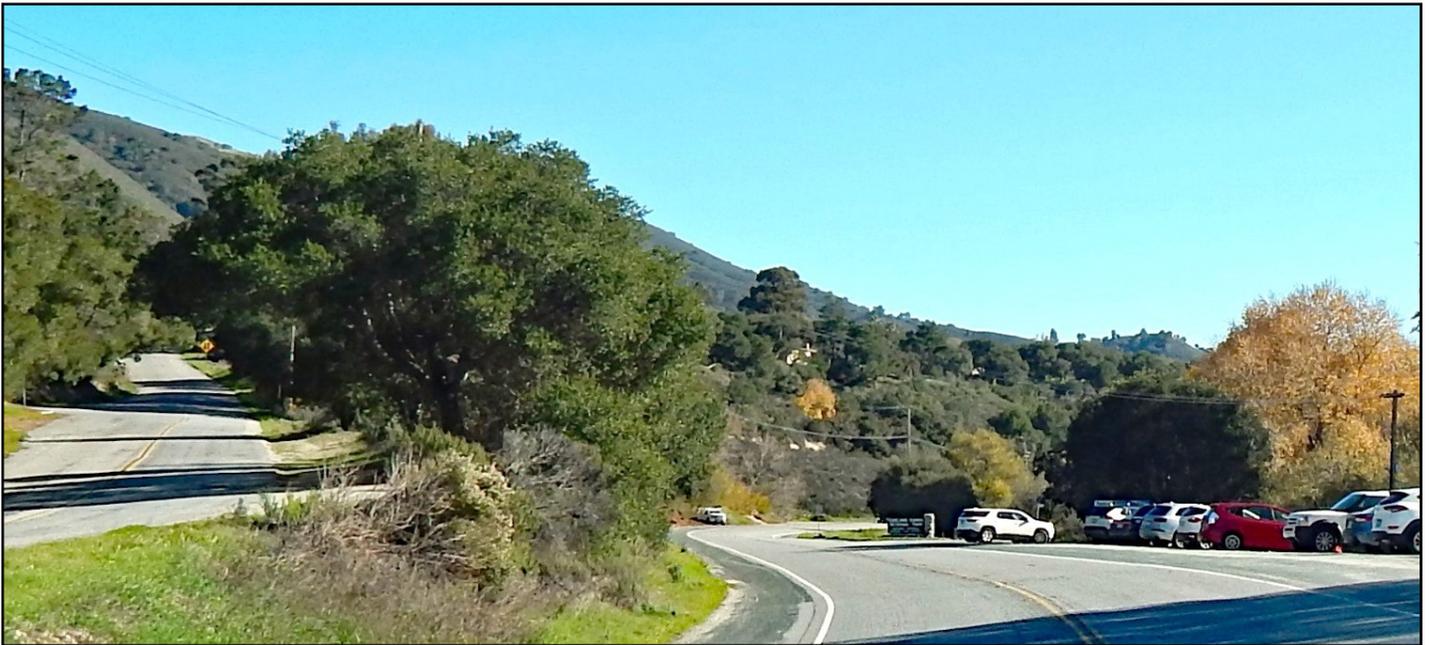
Reconstruction also included changes to correct the drainage problems caused by several springs in the area that were thought to have been a factor in flood damage.





The upper photos show the washed-out road and bridge. The old road can be seen in the left photo and the bridge would be a future entrance to Garland Park.

The photo at left shows road construction crews at work. The project took nearly 24 months to complete.



Today's peaceful scene above belies the flood damage of a half century ago. Some may not be aware that the CV Road section by Garland Park is the "new road" that came out of this flood. Miramonte Road is seen at left – the long and winding detour taken during road reconstruction.

Photo credits: aerial photo and photo of construction vehicles by George T. C. Smith, photo of road damage courtesy of Lazare family, bridge washout photo courtesy of Ellen Osborne (River Ranch), today's road photo by Jeff Ohlson.

(Continued from page 1)

Monterey and Tassajara was established the same year by J.E. Rust. Semi-weekly trips deposited passengers at the James (now Lambert) Ranch. From there they rode in, as advertised, on "a good saddle trail," or hiked the final ten miles. Invalids seeking a cure at the springs were carried in on a cart. The earliest hot springs owner, Jack Borden, sold his squatters rights to William Hart in 1876. By then a small log building served as a hotel, along with a few rough cabins and tents, plus a bath house and dining room.

From the Salinas side, passengers by 1878 traveled over Laureles Grade, at the time a rugged cattle drive and wagon road. From Carmel Valley, they headed east to Rancho Tularcitos, where they spent the night. Leaving their wagons, guests took horses the following day, heading through the Chew property to reach the cabins at Tassajara by mid-afternoon. Cabins rented for \$10.00 per week and campers paid \$3.00 a week to stay in a tent.

In 1885 new owner Charles Quilty planned to construct an improved road all the way in to the springs. Funds fluctuated, making the work proceed slowly, or not at all. After the road crews quit, Quilty hired Chinese laborers, who worked with picks and dynamite to cut through sandstone and granite to open the final route into the hot springs. The steep,



Jamesburg resident George Irwin Hallock drove the Tassajara Stage 1908-1913.

(Photo: CVHS, Hallock Family Collection)

one-lane wagon road, which led over Chew's and Black Butte Ridges, opened for travel in September 1888. With the increase in visitors and enhanced transportation, Quilty soon improved the spa's accommodations with a sandstone hotel and cottages. The resort was open for seasonal business from early May until late October. Advertisements praised the spa's amenities, claiming the hot mineral water, when drunk and soaked in, cured ailments ranging from rheumatism to liver and kidney complaints.



By the 1870s, guest accommodations for travelers to Tassajara were crude cabins such as this.

(Photo: Monterey County Free Libraries)

Weekly trips ran from Salinas, with the stage departing at 8:00 AM on Fridays. After an overnight stop at Jamesburg, they pulled in at Tassajara by Saturday afternoon. The return trip left the springs the following Friday. After another overnight stay, passengers arrived back in Salinas on Saturday afternoon, so those continuing on to San Jose or San Francisco arrived in time to catch the train home.

The trip was never an easy one. Gil Cano of Salinas, who drove the stage for two years for the Bullene Brothers in 1893-94, described the last leg of the trip. "From Salinas to the Gordon rancho I drove fast horses, but from the rancho to the springs I drove big horses. That was a mountain road as an average one-way road. I had about one foot of spare earth in places, and I put on the spare curtains to keep the passengers from looking down the high cliffs. Some of the turns were so short that I had to be very careful." The Gordon ranch was located on Rancho Tularcitos.

By the 1890s, with an improved road, the trip only took one day with stages running Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, departing Salinas at 6:00 AM and arriving at the springs at 6:00 PM. The Bullene Brothers' line had three sets of horses for the run: from Salinas to just past today's Carmel Valley Village, then another change at Jamesburg and then the final change for Tassajara.

Jamesburg's George Irwin Hallock signed on as the Tassajara Stage driver in 1908. In addition to driving the stage, he also led camping parties into the woods around Tassajara and shot deer for the guests' dining pleasure. He maintained his stage driver's route until 1913 when John Tomasini took over.

The beginning of the end of horse stage travel to Tassajara occurred in early June 1909 when the

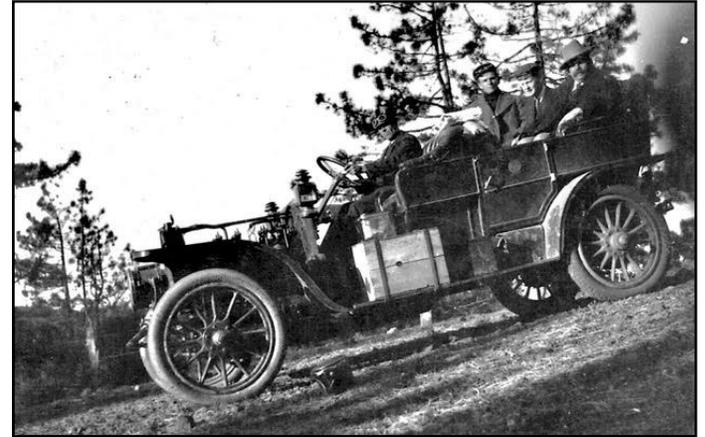
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first auto trip was made in a 45 horsepower Stoddard-Dayton Touring Car, driven by Abelardo Cooper. With a group of friends, he departed Salinas at 3:00 AM. The round trip delivered the party back home by 3:30 the same afternoon.



By 1916 the auto stage and private cars had overtaken travel by horse and buggy to Tassajara Hot Springs. Here newly arrived guests are being greeted.



The first auto to reach Tassajara was driven by Abelardo Cooper who, with some friends, made the trip from Salinas and back in 12 and a half hours in 1909.

Visitors to Tassajara often wrote to the newspaper or sent letters home describing their experiences getting both to and from Tassajara. Below are some of their comments:

"...the road is hardly wide enough, and the turns are so sharp, and the descent so steep that you have to have a good and gentle pair of horses, besides a good driver and good brakes on your wagon, otherwise the least mis-step will send team and occupants a thousand feet below."

Tassajara visitors Adolfo Sanchez, C.H. Rodriguez, N.J. Little and R.H. Willey, describing an 1889 trip to the springs.

#### Life at Tassajara

"All aboard for Tassajara!  
Boys and girls and men and ladies.  
Up the Hills and down the mountain,  
Till you think you're nearing Hades.

Oh! We're such a jolly party  
Tho' the "downward road" ends near  
Where the Tassajara Hot Springs  
Swiftly gushes hot and clear.

"Life at Tassajara," Louis Parmelee, Salinas Daily Index, June 27, 1901

"The reports being brought to Salinas about the Tassajara stage being smashed up in a runaway were greatly exaggerated. The fact is that the horses started up, being stung by bees, while the driver was putting a trunk in the stage, but did not get away, as Mr. Soberanes grabbed the lines and run them into the fence, breaking one wheel of the stage and nothing more."

Salinas Weekly Index, May 21, 1892

Although both horse and auto stages made the Tassajara run for a few more years, the spring season of 1916 spelled the end for the horse stage. The management announced that an auto bus driven by Ira Bailey would henceforth carry passengers to the springs. By then, travel time had been cut down to just a few hours, with guests leaving Salinas at 7:00 AM and arriving at the springs in time for lunch.

"On the return trip last Tuesday from Tassajara Springs, the day being very hot, one of the stage horses of the Bullene Brothers melted down and dropped dead coming through Toro."

Salinas Weekly Index, July 14, 1894

"Before starting down the steep grade to the springs, driver Williams examined every bolt in his coach and put extra leather on the brakes to make sure that all was secure for the perilous descent of [the final] four miles. Then away we go with the mules at a brisk pace, dashing down steep declines, whirling around sharp curves, causing the passengers to hold their breath, brace against each other and grasp the iron railing of the seats to keep from being hurled out into the dizzy depths of the seemingly bottomless canyon below. Meanwhile the driver, with a foot on the break lever and whip ready to sting any faltering mule, quietly tells passengers not to be afraid, assuring them there is no danger. Midway down the grade a stop had to be made to cool the almost red-hot tires with water from a nearby spring. Finally, a turn at the bottom of the grade brings us in view of the hotel and we are greeted with cheers from the crowd of assembled guests who are always glad to see new arrivals and receive letters from home and newspapers with news of the outside world."

William J. Hill, Editor, Salinas Weekly Index, June 16, 1904.

### Carmel Valley Historical Society

WEB | [carmelvalleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://carmelvalleyhistoricalsociety.org)  
 f | Carmel Valley History Center  
 EMAIL | [cvhs3@live.com](mailto:cvhs3@live.com)  
 CALL | (831) 659-5715  
 WRITE | PO Box 1612  
 Carmel Valley, CA 93924-1612  
 VISIT | 77 West Carmel Valley Road  
 Virtual Tour | [carmelvalleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://carmelvalleyhistoricalsociety.org)

#### History Center Museum

**SATURDAYS 1-4**

**SUNDAYS 11-2**

#### Board of Directors

Kim Williams	President
Gary Tate	Vice President
Dave Terdy	Treasurer
Cherie Ohlson	Secretary
Elizabeth Barratt	Recording Secretary
Dick Barratt	Member
Jeff Ohlson	Member
Christine Williams	Member
Ellsworth Gregory	Member Emeritus

Historians: Elizabeth Barratt  
 Jeff Ohlson

Newsletter Production: Kim Williams

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 CARMEL VALLEY, CA 93924-1612  
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## Upcoming Event

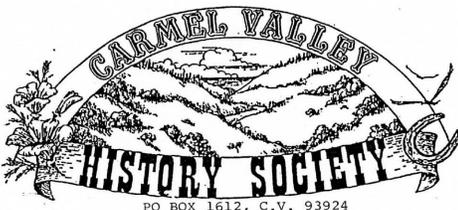
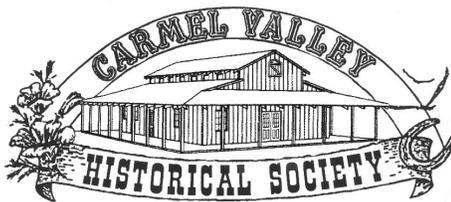
### Saturday Afternoon, April 23, 2022

#### CVHS Membership Meeting (4:00-6:00) at the History Center

- Reconnect with friends
- Review of the past year's accomplishments and finances
- Elect board members and vote on the revised bylaws
- Enjoy an historical presentation
- Enjoy light refreshments and beverages



Share us  to your Facebook page:  
 Carmel Valley History Center



## CVHS Sports a New Logo

By Kim Williams

As you may have noticed on the banner of this newsletter, we have a new Carmel Valley Historical Society logo. For just the third time in our 36-year history, the Historical Society has adopted a new logo.

The change was prompted by the transformation into the digital age. Needing a logo that would look good on our website whether viewed on a computer or on a mobile phone, Jeff Ohlson and our web designer Susan Bancroft developed our new barn logo reflecting the image of our second logo.

Our second logo was developed in 2004 from drawings of the proposed History Center made by Marj Ingram Viales and Luke Ingram of Carmel Valley Design, during the fundraising efforts that resulted in our wonderful building that is completely debt free.

Founding member and local artist Julia Harvey designed the Society's original iconic logo at the societies inception in 1987. A wood carving of the logo was made and is in the History Center Museum. And for the 1899-1989 Carmel Valley Centennial the logo was used for a limited edition silver belt-buckle designed by Carmel Valley silver-smith Ken Ramoni.