

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ANDERSON CANYON AREA

First of all, the place names deserve explanation. James Andersen was an early settler, having emigrated from Denmark by 1874, when he, Thomas Slate, and Philip Dolan helped the Partington family pack in to their new homestead. In 1883 James's brother Peter came to the coast, homesteading 240 acres (site of the Ventana Wilderness Sanctuary). The brothers built a ship landing close to James's place, at today's Burns Creek (Andersen was there years before John and Julia Pfeiffer Burns, who lived in the house James built). Their friend and countryman Nes Swending wed Mary Dani of Lucia, and claimed Marble Peak far above the Andersens.

Before the Andersens arrived, the stream was called Pino Pelado Creek, for the double summit—Pino Pelado Peak—at its headwaters. Near the top of the southern elevation is a ponderosa pine which has had a strip of bark peeled off by lightning—thus the name "peeled pine peak." A quarter mile to the northwest the other, slightly higher, treeless summit of Pino Pelado Peak rises to 4099', and is today called Anderson Peak, the location of various government installations.



Peter G. Andersen, July 1937. Photo courtesy Monterey Public Library archives.

Peter Andersen sold his holdings in 1889 and went to work at the Hotel Del Monte, later retiring to Berkeley. James sold out to his old friend Tom Slate in 1890, and moved to Sierra County.

Of interest is a news clipping from the *Monterey Herald*, dated July 20th, 1937, in which the elderly Peter Andersen is interviewed regarding his first visit to the South Coast since his 1889 departure. The much-proclaimed new highway—whose 60th anniversary was celebrated this summer—had drawn Andersen down the coast, to visit his old friend John M. Pfeiffer, and to see again the canyon of his youth. Of course everything was changed—even the name of his creek had

been misspelled! The Andersens were Danish, and Anderson is a Swedish name!

The 1880s were busy times on the coast, which supported a population perhaps twice today's number. Gold and limestone were being extracted, with the forests yielding redwood lumber and tan bark. "Doghole ports," or primitive ship landings, were built—often in places fit only for a dog—to export the wealth. The Andersens had theirs, and their neighbors to the north, Partington, Stevens and West, called theirs Seaview Landing. These sites are shown on the 1891 U. S. Coast and Geodetic survey map (overleaf). Three cultivated ranch areas are also shown: Chris McWay's on the north (where the map breaks), the old J. Andersen place (owned by Thomas Benton Slate at the time), and Slate's extensive improvements at Hot Springs Canyon.

By the turn of the century or so, yet another doghole port was in service between Partington's and Andersen's. Called Saddle Rock Landing, it was sited on the north side of Anderson Creek—the present-day Staude property—a location shown as a hayfield on the 1891 map. The tan bark of Anderson Canyon was shipped from this landing, named for its proximity (0.4 mi.) to Saddle Rock. It seems significant that at one time there were three landings operating along a mere three-mile stretch of coast, a direct indication of the timber resource which once existed thereabouts.

Following are the words of Edward Waters, interviewed by John Woolfenden in 1967. In 1908-'09 Ed packed in supplies to his uncles, John and Joe Waters, operators of the landing.

"The bark was corded and made ready for shipment. A cable was taken out and over the schooner [*Confianza*] to three buoys, was pulled tight on shore and attached to a large tree. A donkey engine was anchored to another tree and an endless small cable was then attached to a platform which was loaded with one tier of bark.

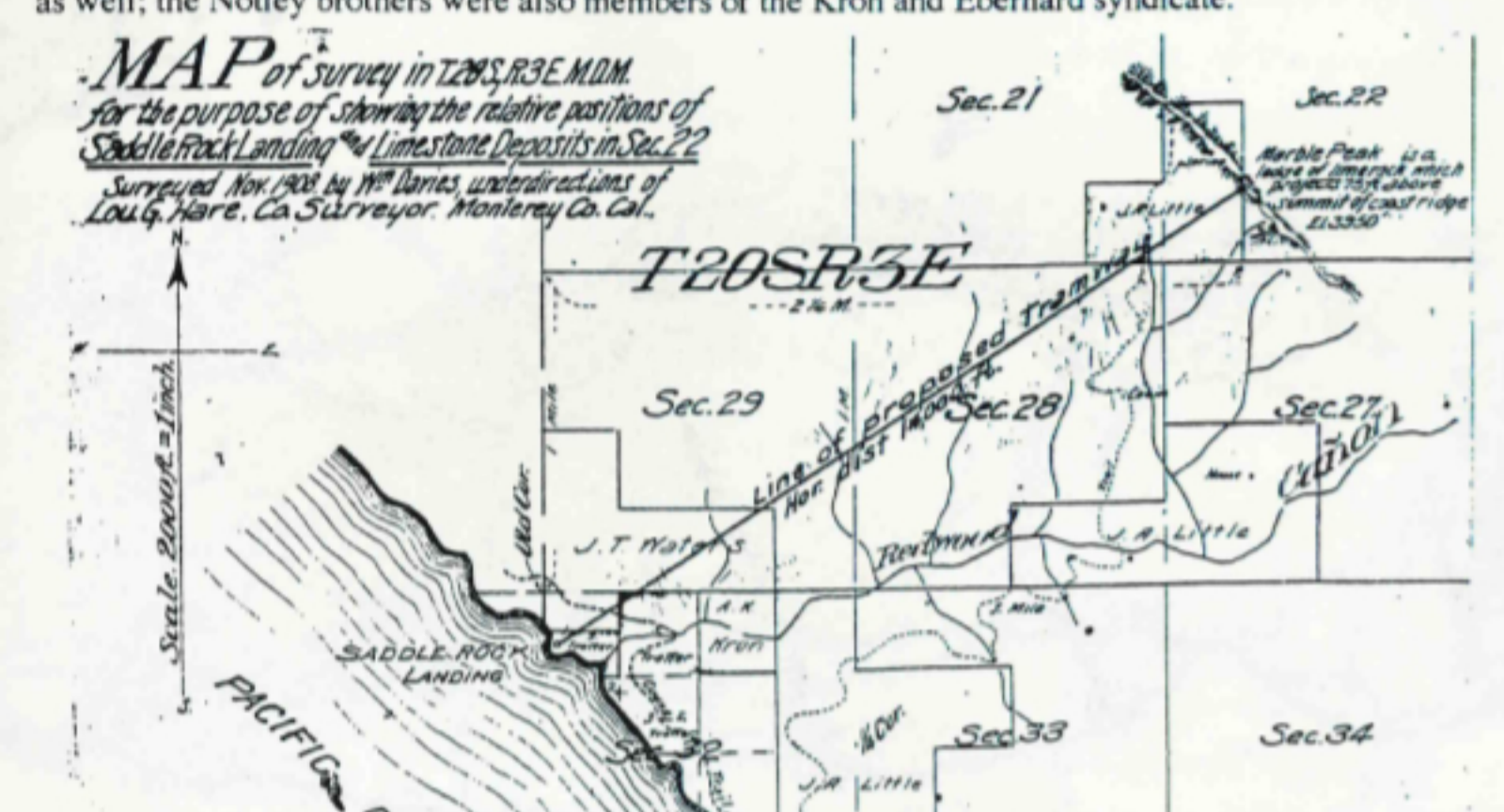
"About six men worked on shore to load the sleds or platforms which were lowered on the cable with pulleys until they were over the deck of the schooner. A cord was fastened so that it could be tripped and the bark would drop safely on deck. The cable was about 600 feet long and the donkey engine was operated by John Waters."

Waters, who homesteaded up McWay Canyon, had married Rachel McWay, daughter of pioneer Chris McWay. John's brother Edmund (Edward's father) married Rosa Soberanes, who once lived at Soberanes Creek in Garrapata State Park, and her sister Bersabe was the wife of Tom Slate. Rachel McWay's sister Antoinette wed John Little, a Monterey native (his father, Milton A., in 1850 owned all of New Monterey). John Little, through homesteading and "buying out" other settlers, came to own many hundreds of acres between Big Creek and McWay. His son, Deal Little, was the colorful Monterey taxi dispatcher who dealt much of the land to the Staudes in the 1950s.

John Little owned the hot springs for a while, having bought much of the land his brothers, Milton T. and Walter Colton Little, acquired from Slate (including ranchland originally homesteaded by James Andersen). Thus there was familial circuitry involving the Slates, Waterses, Soberaneses, Littles, and McWays—a close linkage within a small coastal area, but with connections which draw in Monterey County's history as far back as 1769 and the arrival of José María Soberanes.

By 1908 the value of nearby Marble Peak's limestone was an issue. Limekilns in Bixby Canyon were in full operation, although those at Limekiln Creek had been idle for some 18 years. John Little owned the lime rock (he had acquired Swending's land after the latter's suicide), and apparently commissioned a survey to depict the best route to ship the product: a tramway similar to Monterey Lime Company's at Bixby. Little's brother-in-law John Waters owned part of the right-of-way, with Saddle Rock Landing in Sam Trotter's name at the time. Trotter was working for Kron and Eberhard Tanning Co., of San Francisco, a major user of tan bark. This huge monopoly owned Notley's Landing as well; the Notley brothers were also members of the Kron and Eberhard syndicate.

This map (x 1/2) showing the tramway was given to BSHS by Mrs. Elmer Grossman, whose grandmother Helen Hooper Brown donated Saddle Rock Ranch—today's Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park. Mrs. Brown acquired the map when she and her husband bought lands, including those once owned by John Waters, in 1924. The 1908 map establishes the site of Saddle Rock Landing, which has



been overlooked by many historians. In a way, there were two Anderson landings: the first one (at Burns Creek), and the doghole at Anderson Creek, originally known as Saddle Rock Landing.

Wilber Harlan's first-born son Aaron (a nephew of Mary Dani Swending) homesteaded in McWay and Anderson canyons after his return from World War I. Aaron, born at Lucia in 1890, also shipped tan bark from Saddle Rock. By the time the highway "work road" had reached Anderson Creek (prior to 1926), Saddle Rock Landing was owned by "Pop" Ernest Doelter, the Monterey restaurateur who originated the abalone steak. Pop Ernest's seafood house was a favorite hangout of George Sterling, Jack London, and also Andrew Molera. Aaron Harlan dove for abalone for Pop Ernest, who must have utilized the Anderson site for abalone harvesting.

Consider the situation a bit further. Highway work was stalled for several years in the late '20s and early '30s. Anderson Creek was literally "the end of the road" during Prohibition, and the property, with its boat landing, was in the hands of Monterey's best-known speak-easy proprietor! The place must have acquired a "reputation" years before the convict camp was built for highway laborers, circa 1932. Strategically, Anderson was a good place to house the prisoners: no traffic could get through to the south, and to the north lived the engineers, surveyors, etc.—the free workers at "Free Camp," or Krenkel Corners (where BSHS met in October, 1996).

Henry Miller has written of the lifestyle of the "Anderson Creek Gang," which moved in when the highway workers left with completion of the road. The pioneer gangster was Harry Partsch, avant-garde musician who was there as early as 1940, when Gui de Angulo remembers visiting him. He wrote music which required instruments not yet invented—so Partsch made his own, right there at Anderson. Later collagist Jean Varda moved in, engaging in his famous "back-to-the-earth" experiment (which failed miserably, according to Mr. Staude).

During the Varda period a writer by the name of Elizabeth Smart was at Anderson. Her novella, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* (published in 1945), may be the first fiction regarding Big Sur's bohemia. She maintained that "before the convict workers put in the road, loneliness drove women to jump into the sea. Tales were told of the convicts: how some went mad along the Coast, while others became hypnotized by it, and, when they were released, returned to marry local girls."

In 1944 Emil White, then Miller, moved to the deserted camp—with the Miller shack having been restored by the Staudes. A few old-timers, such as Barbara Spring and Helen Morgenrath, were part of the scene in those days, too. If we are lucky they will join us—to add their stories and complete our knowledge of this amazing place.