



Three Rocks Research

So that others may know ...SM

The Three Rocks Report

A Message

Idria was visited last weekend for more photographs of the historic Gould Rotary Furnaces. We are currently completing an application to nominate this furnace complex to the National Register of Historic Places. The furnaces were installed in 1917 and their application revolutionized ore processing worldwide. While the furnaces and their foundations appear sound, the building has suffered terribly from neglect and vandalism. There is concern that the roof and building front may soon collapse. More vandalism was seen on the property and another abandoned vehicle is burned at Mexican Flat, which was reported to San Benito County Sheriff, Curtis Hill.

The ROKON fundraising project is off to a bumpy start, while we've raised about \$700 so far, the book auction was dismal. Auction invitations were sent to more than 1,000 people, but only five visited the auction. The book sale will continue on Amazon.com and on Three Rocks Research webpage.

IRS regulations require us to solicit public support in order to maintain 501(c)(3) status, and acquired assets belong to the nonprofit corporation and their use is controlled by its board of directors. State laws and IRS regulations prohibit personal gain by corporate officers. We also solicit donation because it ensures community co-ownership of our work, thus making it a public, rather than private endeavor.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Steve Amaro as a new addition to our Board of Directors. Steve is a descendant of Joaquin Murrieta and a long-time resident of Hernandez Valley. We are still looking to fill one more seat of the board, so please let us know if you are interested or have question.

Visit <http://www.3rocks.org> for more information.

Save New Idria

Support the

New Idria Preservation Project

Visit <http://www.new-idira.org> for more information.

A Story

Blue Jay Splash

According to Ernie Ramires, descendant of Hernandez Valley pioneer Miguel Ramires, and one of the original south county fire rangers, Blue Jay Splash was the original site of the Beaver Dam Fire Station. Ernie states in his story, "Early State Forestry in San Benito County" that:

A site was chosen a mile or two north of present Beaver Dam Fire Station. Later beavers built dams there. The state provided two used Army tents and beds. We soaked the tents in paraffin dip for waterproofing. Also a flat bed truck was ours. Our foreman's salary was \$65.00 per month. Our crew of five made \$35.00 per month. One of the crew was the cook, and we still had our 15¢ per meal per man. Setting up camp included cleaning up area and building outhouse. Our first priorities were taken care of and we were in business.

Our next concern physical activity, recreation and crew moral for city people living in the country.

I proposed building a dam in the San Benito River to create a swimming hole for crew members and Bitterwater residents. Since I knew many of the farmers and was related to the Tully's I asked for their help. One farmer agreed to loan me horses and a Fresno scraper. One big problem was the fact that the horses needed shoes. The solution was that I shoe the horses and build the dam. The farmer was to supply me whiskey to help complete the job.

We improvised a diving board for the pool. Our pool became very popular with Bitterwater residents. The wives and children of Associated Oil Station #5 enjoyed swimming there. All of which provided sociability, exercise and a welcome break for our fire crew.

Depression days and no maintenance had degraded the farmers phone lines. In the early hours of each day we installed new lines, climbed trees and poles, replaced insulators, remade splices and eventually had a reasonably good two wire phone to King City. Our camp was known as "Blue Jay Splash."

— References —

Ramires, Ernie. "Early State Forestry in San Benito County." (Date unknown).

The Story Behind that Name

Panoche

There is only place in the entire world named Panoche, making it among the world's most unique place names. But, a unique name is only appropriate for a special place that exhibits one of the states most beautiful spring wildflower displays, contains unique paleontology, is renowned by bird-watchers, and may be the origin for the name *panocha*, a popular Mexican sugar.



Spring Time in Panoche Valley

Panoche Valley is located in the center of San Benito County and is formed from the basin of an ancient Pleistocene lake. We are unsure if the name Panoche is an Indian or an Indian/Spanish name. Augustine Hernandez said in 1863 that Panoche takes its "name from a species of cane growing in the valley, from which the Indian extracted *panoche*, a kind of sugar." Jesse Smith, the discoverer of the Aurora Mine in 1851 (the first mine in the area) explained that the valley was named for the Indian word of a sugar they made from a cane they harvested in the eastern part of the valley, "where there is a fine spring of water, there grows a kind of weed or cane, which is sweet. In early times the Indians made from this weed or cane something they called *Panoche*, a kind of sugar, which they are, and from which

they named the valley and creek."

Later, in 1888, Henry Pitts, co-discoverer of the New Idria Mine said, "At that time there was considerable swampland in the lower end of the Valley and that a honey dew, called *panoche* by the Mexicans and Indians, settled on the trees, tulles and shrubbery, quite heavily. It was a sugar like substance and a very pleasant delicacy; hence the valley was named Panoche."

Pitts said that he had joined the natives at certain periods in gathering it. Pitts also talked about an article he read that stated, "that the name was derived from the rolling hills nearby and the those hills resembled Panoche candy, which was quite popular a number of years ago. I feel that story could not be accurate, since the valley was named Panoche years before the candy product was manufactured." This might be an interesting revelation because Henry Pitts' statement suggest that the popular Mexican sugar, *panocha*, is named for the panoche that was manufactured by local Indian, from a sugar cane that grew in the valley.

— References —

Tully, Gene - from a newspaper clipping titled "Early Resident Recalls County Incidents." Date and newspaper name unknown. (Ashurst collection).

The History of the McGarrahan Claim. Unknown author, date ca. 1870.

Pioneers and People

Michael Cody

Very little is known about Mr. Cody. He was probably attracted to the area by the Idria's discovery of wealth. We do know that he was involved with E. C. Tully and Wiley Williams' early work at the Picacho Mine. Mr. Cody was supervisor at the Picacho Mine "where ore was taken out by miners on tribute." He remained supervisor after Tully and Williams sold their interest. According to published letters, Mr. Cody was also associated with William McGarrahan and Vicente Gomez' "Panoche Grande" conspiracy to defraud New Idria from their lawful claim. For unknown reasons Mr. Cody sold his small ranch located at the "extreme head of the San Benito," something in late 1869. He was fired from his supervisory position in 1871 because of his involvement with McGarrahan's attempts to also obtain the Picacho Mine.

By 1875 Mr. Cody is back in the employ of E. C. Tully where he is working a quicksilver lode discovered near Tully's home in Bitterwater valley. Mr. Cody later opened the San Benito Quicksilver Mine which was located on the edge of the San Benito River below Picacho. This mine was also known as the Cody Mine and later became the Breen Mine.

— References —

The History of the McGarrahan Claim. Unknown author, date ca. 1870.

Elliott & Moore. *History of San Benito County, California, with Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens.* San Francisco, California: Elliott & Moore. 1881.

Button, A. T. D. "Adherble T.D. Button Collection. Letters from 1848-1905." California State Parks, San Juan Bautista State Historic Park.

New Idria Tour

Join us May 13 for guided tour of this historic mining town

Visitors should arrive at Idria by 9:00 AM. A guided two-hour tour begins at 10:00. Visitors may roam the property freely after completing the guided tour.

The tour is free ... but reservations are required.

Call Ray Iddings at (831) 427-0918 for information or reservations.

Visit <http://www.new-idria.org>

Visitors and tour participants must know that there are currently no services or facilities at Idria. You must bring your own lunch, snacks, beverage and water. Toilets are very primitive, ranging from seated buckets to isolated bushes with shovel. Limited primitive camping space is available.

The Three Rocks Report

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April 2006

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