



Three Rocks Research

So that others may know ...SM

The Three Rocks Report

A Message

The California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs held their 32nd annual Molina Ghost Run a few weeks ago. It rained Friday night before the event's big day and the scene at their camp, near the entrance of the Salinas Rambler's property, quickly became reminiscent of an old mining boomtown with tents pitched anywhere people could find sufficiently dry ground. All of the trodden paths quickly became soggy mud bogs and everyone was forced to walk or drive through ankle-deep mud, as there was no solid ground found except where camps were made. Regardless, everyone was of festive spirit, which contributed greatly to another successful Molina Ghost Run; I was told that the events went well and everyone had a safe and joyful time.

I attended this year's event by invitation from Steve Amaro who arranged for me to talk during the Historical Run. We began our venture at the Eade Memorial where I told them about Raymond Eade, the old site of the Erie school and the not-so-famous Del Monte Hotel. A short drive later brought us to the site of the old brick kiln. The tour continued, with many informative stops along the way until we reached the summit above the Aurora Mine. Here slippery conditions prevented us from continuing down the other side. Even though it was cold, windy and drizzly, everyone seemed to enjoy the tour and gained a new appreciation for this area and its special story.

On another note:

Three Rocks Research is continuing to conduct public presentations on the New Idria Preservation Project. We have two scheduled presentations in Hollister this month (14th and 18th). Telephone me at (831) 427-0918 for more details.

I would like to schedule more presentations and could use a little help with arranging them. Please let me know if you belong to a group who would like to hear this presentation as I have some openings available in May and early June. The presentation includes about 30 feet of display table with photographs and display boards, and a thirty-minute slide show and talk.

A Story

Joaquín Rocks

Joaquín Rocks is a rugged area of hard sandstone outcroppings located in the hills about twenty miles northwest of Coalinga. This area is dominated by three large rock outcroppings that overlook the San Joaquín Valley to the northeast.



Joaquín Rocks

According to Frank Latta, Joaquín Rocks is historically known as "Las Tres Piedras," or The Three Rocks, because the feature is easily identified from the central San Joaquín Valley as three large rocks that jut from the ridge. A small community called Three Rocks, located on California highway 33, near Interstate 5, is named after the fact that the three rocks are visible from their community.

Las Tres Piedras became known as Joaquín's Rocks around 1880, because many people believed that this was the hideout for Joaquín Murrieta and that his camp was located at the base of these cliffs. Although legend has that Joaquín Murrieta was California's most famous outlaw bandito, to many he is thought of as a "Robin Hood" figure. It is also believed that Joaquín Rocks was visited by other famous California bandits such as Tiburcio Vásquez.

For all of its ruggedness, Joaquín Rocks is also a beautifully mysterious place that is difficult to describe. Certainly, the Tachi Yokuts, the indigenous people who inhabited this region for thousands of years, found this region mysterious. To the Tachi, this is the area where the "The Owners of the Sun" lived. In Kroeber's translation of that story we learn about a place in the Diablo Range that is described as a "circle of large rocks":

In the Tachi territory in the Coast Range is a circle of large rocks. These are certain people who had the sun. They kept it in the middle of the circle, just above their heads. Coyote and the eagle took it away from them. Then they became ashamed and turned to stone. If one speaks to them now, they still answer; but it is hard to reach that place, for they do not like to be seen by anyone, and when one approaches it he meets wind and rain.

The BLM acquired this section of land in the mid 1980s and kept the gate at Wright Mountain. Access control is maintained to restrict vehicle access to the area. Visitors must park their vehicle at Wright Mountain and hike 6 miles to Joaquín Rocks.

You can learn more about this wondrous and mysterious place by visiting our web site at: <http://www.picacho.org/>

— References —

Latta, Frank F. 1980. *Joaquin Murrieta and His Horse Gangs*. Santa Cruz, California: Bear State Books.

Kroeber, A. L. *Indian Myths of South Central California*. Berkeley: The University Press. 1907.

An Information Tip

Stop Ticks from Biting

Here is a great tip for people who have to deal with ticks. Permethrin is a man-made insecticide that was originally derived from the crushed dried flowers of the chrysanthemum. The permethrin currently sold to consumers is a synthesized product that was developed in the 1970's. Permethrin works as a contact insecticide, damaging the nervous system of insects which come in contact with it, causing them to either die or fall off. Permethrin is effective against multiple species of crawling and flying insects, including mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, bedbugs, chiggers, and flies. Ticks crawling across permethrin-treated pant legs or socks are likely to drop off before they are able to attach and feed.

Permethrin is not intended for direct application to the skin, but should be applied to clothing. When treating a garment with permethrin, spray the cloth outdoors and allow it to dry before wearing. One great benefit of permethrin is that it remains effective for about two washings after treatment.

The Story Behind that Name

Goat Mountain

Many of the dirt bikers and jeep drivers who play in the Clear Creek area believe that this feature is called Goat Mountain because you need to be like a "billy goat" to climb it. That thought is a bit strange because there is nothing particularly more difficult about the trails on this mountain verses many of the other trails in the Clear Creek area. Sometime in the late 1800s this mountain became known as the Great Mammoth Peak and was named such on the Punnett Brothers 1914 map of San Benito County. It became known as the Great Mammoth Peak because it somewhat resembles the head of Great Mammoth Elephant when viewed from the Clear Creek entrance road.

According to Jack James, this peak become known as Goat Mountain some time in the 1920s because a local rancher and miner, Joe Tirado, ran his goats on the mountain then.

A Reader's Story

Ed Kreyenhagen shared an old news article, given to him by Glenn Marcussen. The article is from the Fresno Daily Evening Expositor dated 1885:

The Hollister Advance says: "Sheriff Ross and Constable Gonzales returned home Wednesday after a weeks absence hunting stolen horses. At the Mexican mine, 20 miles from New Idria, they found three horses that had been stolen from Donnelly, Dunne & Co.'s ranch, and in the Cantua Canyon they recovered a horse that had been stolen from a Fresno man. 'Buster' says the Cantua country is full of places where stolen stock can be hidden. The thief who took Donnelly, Dunne & Co.'s horses had already been captured by Sheriff Meade, of Fresno, before 'Buster' arrived."



The Three Rocks Report

Pioneers and People

Guadalupe Cantua

The Cantua family traces its history in the Americas to Ygnacio Cantua who was born about 1740 in Rio Yaqui, Sonora, Vice Royalty of New Spain Mexico. Ygnacio served as one of the twenty select *Soldado de Anza Expedition* in 1774 and was discharged in 1780. He married Maria Gertrudis del Castillo and together they had ten children. Ygnacio was settled at San Juan Bautista by 1788 where a son José Julián Cantua was born. He remained at San Juan for the rest of his life and is buried at Mission San Juan Bautista, which was founded June 24, 1797.

One of Ygnacio's sons, José de Guadalupe Cantua (born 1786), went commonly by name Guadalupe Cantua. Guadalupe served with the Spanish army that was stationed at San Juan Bautista and led the party that explored the Arroyo Cantua area. He was one of the soldiers responsible for gathering the Indians from that area. Guadalupe later obtained a 4,389-acre land grant, San Luisito, at San Luis Obispo. Guadalupe married

Carmel (unknown last name) and together they had several children. Two of Guadalupe's children, Lupe and Domingo lived at Arroyo Cantua and ran with the famous Joaquín Murrieta gang.

One of Guadalupe's daughters, Maria Guadalupe, married José Hermenegildo Vásquez in 1821. Maria and José had one child in 1835; his name was Tiburcio Vásquez, who become another of California's most famous criminals.

Cantua Creek is named for Guadalupe Cantua who first explored that area and established a small camp there.

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