



# Three Rocks Research

*So that others may know ...<sup>SM</sup>*

## The Three Rocks Report

### A Message

The month of May ended with an extremely enlightening venture with historians Debbie (Melendy) Norman and John Boessenecker. We retraced the path of Tiburcio Vásquez' crime spree through San Benito County. It was quite an honor to tour the area with two very knowledgeable people and the venture has left me with a great deal of additional research to complete. Our tour included some very interesting historic sites such as the Dr. Powers murder site where Debbie described how the murder occurred. It turns out that this event is significant to California history because it led to California's first attempt to prosecute a vigilante group. We also visited historic Tres Pinos (now Paicines) where we talked about how the old town looked and observed several debris clusters suggesting the location of historic building sites. Our tour also included Robber's Roost, the Augustine Hernandez homestead, Idria and Lorenzo

### A Story

#### *Robber's Roost*

Robber's Roost is a sandstone outcropping located the San Benito River a few miles south of the Willow Creek confluence. The location became known as Robber's Roost shortly after a stage robbery occurred there in 1872. On April 20, 1872, Tiburcio Vasquez and one gang member robbed the Hollister-to-Picacho stagecoach just before it was to arrive at the little village of San Benito.

The robbers hid in the rock's crevice waiting for the southbound stage to arrive. As the stage slowed for the river ford, the armed bandits boldly pounced upon their prey and ordered the driver, Doc Garner, and his passenger off the stage. The robbers quickly tied the victims with rope, pilfered their luggage and mailbags,



#### **Robber's Roost in Central San Benito County (looking northeast)**

Location of California outlaw, Tiburcio Vasquez' April 1872 stage robbery of the San Benito Stage while the stage was en route between Tres Pinos (now known as Paicines) and town of San Benito. The robbery occurred as the stage slowed for the river ford.

Vásquez' homestead as John told detailed accounts of Tiburcio Vásquez' life.

Debbie Norman is very knowledgeable about San Benito County history will hopefully be writing a book on that subject soon. John Boessenecker's has published several books about western bad guys and lawmen and will soon publish a new book on Tiburcio Vásquez that promises to provide the most accurate account of this famous California criminal.

and left Garner and his passengers face down in the sand at the riverbank.

Joe Castro, who owned a roadside saloon at nearby Pine Rock, was arrested by Constable Wilson McCool the following day on suspicion of helping plan the holdup. He was held under guard at the nearby Breen ranch in preparation for transporting him to Hollister. However, around midnight on April 23 four armed men, disguised

with sacks over their heads, smashed into the cabin and ordered the deputized guards to surrender their prisoner. Upon leaving with Castro, they warned to guards to remain inside. Castro's body was found the next day hanging from a nearby tree. The vigilantes were never caught, but some years later, it was learned that they were also party who murdered Dr. Powers in Bear Valley.

— **References** —

Peter Frusetta

John Boessenecker

## The Story Behind that Name

### *Duckworth Canyon*

According to Ray Duckworth, son of Edward Duckworth, this canyon was originally known locally as Pine Canyon, but changed its name to Duckworth Canyon after Edward Duckworth homesteaded there in 1905. Edward Duckworth was born in 1884 and moved to the canyon around 1905. He did a little ranching, operated a distillery, and provided pinewood to the Florence Mack cinnabar mine. He worked in the oil fields during the depression and died in 1962.

— **References** —

Ray Duckworth

## Pioneers and People

### *Charles Elmer Garrison*

According to Jack James, Charles Garrison moved to his homestead in Garrison around 1926. He moved to Coalinga after his first wife died and took work as a mechanic. He later remarried and moved back out to his old homestead sometime in the 1930s.

Charles was born March 3, 1873 in Tulare, California. He died March 13, 1952 in Moorpark, California. He was the son of Ephraim Pennington Garrison (Dec. 25, 1839 - Apr. 25, 1914) and Mary Catalina Sentell (May 21, 1852 - Oct. 11, 1931). He had two sisters: Catherine (Katy) Garrison (Feb. 4, 1877 - Apr. 18, 1881) and S. J. Garrison (1879). Charles had three children: Cecil E. Garrison (Nov. 28, 1909 - May 28, 1966) and two whose names are unknown.

— **References** —

Jack James

Ancestry.com

# *The Three Rocks Report*

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