HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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# BIG BASIN REDWOODS
## (California Redwood Park)

State Park No. 38

by

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BIG BASIN REDWOODS (CALIFORNIA REDWOOD PARK)

The "Big Basin" State Redwood Park is on the northern edge of Santa Cruz County, in the Santa Cruz Mountains so graphically described by Bret Harte in some of his earliest stories. It lies a few miles west of Santa Clara County, and touches portions of San Mateo County and the Pacific Ocean. The total Redwood Park area consists of approximately 12,000 acres. From an "airplane view" the picture is that of an immense checker-board with the Big Basin village its eastern center.

Santa Cruz County is a narrow belt of country lying along the Pacific Ocean, north of the Bay of Monterey. Its coast line measures fifty miles in length, and, from Point New Years, bends inward in a southeast direction. Width of the county from the ocean eastward through Redwood Park to the county line on the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains, varies from ten to fifteen miles. The highest point in the mountain range is Loma Prieta, 3,780 feet, southeast of the park. The bend of the coast inward toward the east at Point New Years, and below, removes the lowland regions of the park from the great ocean current with its winds and fog.

The redwoods in the higher altitude are thoroughly

soaked during the rainy season, and supplied with surface moisture during the day. They are visited at night by wandering currents of desert warmth from the great valleys, free from ice and snow and frost, and favored by the soothing coolness and bracing breezes of the ocean. The whole park teems with life, health and strength.

Local writers worked to save the redwoods of this region. Among world-famous men of letters, who it is said, traveled through or vacationed in Big Basin, and later used the locale in some of their successful writings of prose and poetry were: Bret Harte, 1867; Robert Louis Stevenson, 1880; Rudyard Kipling, 1889; John Muir, 1907; Edwin Markham, 1915; and John Masefield, 1936.

The heart of the park, known as Big Basin, California, by the United States Postal Service (Governors' Camp), is 62.6 miles from San Francisco on the new Skyline Boulevard, State Highway No. 5. From the south it is 23.1 miles from Santa Cruz, on the old Boulder Creek road, now State Highway No. 17; from the east, 33 miles from San Jose, by way of the Saratoga Summit. What is now known as State Highway No. 9, the alternate route to the Basin, the old Scott's Valley road of the early 1840's. inland from Santa Cruz, is one of the historic roads of the West. It was first a wild animal trail, then followed by the Indians, and finally

traveled by the scout Ortega of the Portolá expedition, 1769. From the Ocean Shore Highway, formerly the Pescadero Stage Route, there is an improved road branching to the park through a part of San Mateo County.

Other than automobile travel over scenic highways, there are three methods whereby connections can be made for Big Basin, during the park season, from May to October. Over the Southern Pacific, the modern stream-line "Daylight" can be boarded at San Francisco, change at San Jose, then to Felton via Los Gatos Pass, where the local stage for the Big Basin Park meets twice daily. At Felton the "County Big Trees," a beautiful grove, are only an acre or more, remnants of the wilderness of giants of the Big Basin Park to the north. From Los Angeles and the south the Golden-Orange limited can be taken, as far as Watsonville Junction; change for Santa Cruz, then to Felton, connecting with the bus for Big Basin. Other methods of transportation are automobile stages and airplane. The airport is six miles southeast of Santa Cruz, near Capitola.

The Big Basin Park is not altogether a basin.[1] Though it is shut in by mountain ranges from 1,000 feet to 1,500 feet in height, there are chains of hills within, coming up almost to that altitude. Along the southwest alone

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1. Out West, XX, 35-44.

it is open to the sea through a 1951-acre tract which faces Ocean Shore Drive, over the historic Waddell Creek. Besides the "grandest trees on earth," the geographical importance of the Big Basin is its region of volcanic fires, of upheavals and earthquakes and of shattering cataclysms and profound disturbances. There are clear records of nine distinct and far-reaching upheavals, said George Wharton James, "as revealed in as many profound inconformities, and that volcanic fires rated in several epochs, one of them for a considerable period, is equally well evidenced."[2]

The village area, extending from Section 32 in Township 8 south, Range 3 west, to Section 8 of Township 9 south, Range 3 west-or that part of upper headwaters of Opal Creek, which in turn is only another branch of the East Branch Waddell Creek - is a narrow, well developed strip of picnic land wherein the "Redwood Trail" circles the big trees. The "camp" contains an inn, cabins and camping ground. There is a store, lunch room, club room, studio and a new museum and a theater, formerly the old "Fire Circle," of thirty years service. Revised 1938 park and trail maps can be procured at the warden's office. Nature guides conduct trips and give lectures. Fishing is good along the west branch of Waddell Creek, Whitehouse

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2. G. W. James, Our American wonderlands.

Creek, Pescadero Creek and Gazos Creek.

The most notable trees have been given individual names. The "Father of the Forest" is 32 feet in diameter, about 90 feet in circumference at the base, 22 feet in diameter five feet above the ground, and 285 feet high. The "Mother of the Forest" is 335 feet high. The "Animal Tree" was so named on account of several burls at its base showing likeness to lions, mountain sheep, an alligator, a beaver, and other, smaller mammals. Similar trees were described by diarists of the Spanish expedition of 1769 as "very knotty." Almong the well known giants are the "Santa Cruz," "Santa Clara," the "Auto Tree" (21 feet in diameter), formerly known as the "Stage Coach Tree" in the 1890's; the "Compass Group," the "Twin Trees," and the various craters of ancient giants. The botanical classification for these coast redwood "big trees" was made by Stephen Endlicher in 1847, his original specimen having been taken from among the Santa Cruz Mountain redwoods.[3]

Although it is chiefly to the big trees that the visitor is attracted, the California Big Basin State Redwood Park is not merely a forest of giant redwood. It is a nature palace of delight with exhibits of other varieties

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3. D. Richards, The soul of Sequoia.

of trees, shrubs, plants, vines, flowers, mosses, fallen logs, rapids, cascades and waterfalls, creeks, boulders, rocks, and hanging gardens.[4] Many varieties of birds inhabit the park, towhees, thrashers, juncos, mocking-birds, white and golden-crowned sparrows, bluebirds, rock wrens, catbirds and jays.[5]

Once a paradise "for the pioneer trappers of the early 1820's, this region still shelters the hidden dens of the grey fox, red fox, civet-cat, mink, otter, martin, now and then a wolverene, the muskrat, raccoon, opossum, skunk, wildcat, coyote, mountain lion, and bear.[6]

The park area is traversed by ten creeks. On the north along the San Mateo County line are the Whitehouse, Cascade, Green Oaks, New Years, Finney and Wilson creeks. Then come the five pronged creeks of the west branch of the famous Waddell Creek emptying into the main branch about two miles from the coast. Opal, Sempervirens, and Bloom creeks, headwater branches of the East Branch Waddell Creek, join the west branch about two miles from the coast -- at one time landmarked by William Waddell's lumber mill of 1861.

During the past fifty years much allusion has been made to the "Berry Creek Falls," "The Falls," the "Verdel

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4. W. L. Jepson, The silva of California.
5. I. G. Wheelock, Birds of California.
6. D. Morton, American Trapper, II, No.1.

Falls," "Golden Falls," "Cascade Falls," and the "Silver Falls;" also, the "Lower and Upper Falls." These are the famous series of four, not eight, waterfalls on Berry Creek. All are within a quarter mile of the fork of West Berry Creek and East Berry Creek, the upper headwaters of the West Branch Waddell Creek, in the northwest area of the park, Section 2 of Township 9 south and Range 4 west.[7]

The other well known are the Woodwardin and Sempervirens. The former is on the edge of private property owned by Paul Shoup, within the heart of the park, about one-quarter mile west of the fork of Opal Creek and Sempervirens Creek, in Section 7 of Township 9 south, and Range 3 west, and one mile west of Governor's Camp. The Sempervirens Falls, are near the Upper Boulder Road, one of the alternate State highways, and one and three-quarters miles from Governor's Camp.[8]

Professor Fernow, of the German forestry service, came to this country at the request of President McKinley to establish the forestry system of the United States. Professor Fernow spent five days investigating the forests of the Big Basin country. He declared the State of California possessed in this forest the most wonderful forest of the world, that,

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7. Assessor's office, Records, January 18, 1938.
8. Official Guide and Trail Map, California State Redwood Park (Big Basin,) 1924.

"it is the oldest and contains the highest and some of the largest trees in the world." He stated that if California knew what she had in this forest she would make it do for California what the cedars of Lebanon did for Palestine, namely; attract to her the whole world.[9]

When the people of California began to realize that lumbering was rapidly denuding the State of its sempervirens agitation to save the forests began. Active agents in the cause were Ralph Sidney Smith, 1877; Captain Ferdinand Clark, 1889; John Muir and the Sierra Club, from 1896 to 1899; the editor of the Santa Cruz Sentinel, March, 1900, which inspired the organization of the California Sempervirens Club, May, 1900. This was followed by Father Kenna's series of articles in the same year in the Sacramento Evening Bee, 1900-1901-- the first "history;" the true spirit of "Save the Redwoods," agitated by Mr. Smith, was finally organized into a great pressure group and, resulted in the acquisition of 3,800 acres in 1902. The California Legislature passed the bill in March, 1901, providing 250,000 dollars for the purchase. Payments were to be made in five annual installments.[10]

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9. Santa Cruz Sentinel, March 16, 1900.
10. The Evening Bee, Sacramento, March 13 and 16, 1901.

The Big Basin, proper, includes about 12,000 acres. It is irregularly basin-shaped, with the lower rim towards and extending westward to the ocean. About fifteen square miles are included within the park.

The park's historical background gives an idea of the antiquity of its trees. As shown by A. L. Kroeber in his archaeological map preface of his University of California Bulletin, "California Kinship Systems," 1917, about twenty large tribes of Indians roamed over the region we know today as California. That was more than 500 years previous to the to the Portolá expedition of 1769 and over 300 years before Galileo invented his telescope; about the time when our giant redwood trees were ten centuries old.

It is said that among mixed nations of twenty tribes, the Costanoan Indians were the true natives of the present park region.[11] They "owned" all of the southern coast strip of redwoods, the land from San Francisco Bay south to the Big Sur country, as well as inland through Santa Clara Valley and east as far as the former 1,000-lake region of Stockton.[12]

Cabrillo, in 1542, did not record that he saw any Indians within the area centering in and around Santa Cruz

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11. A. L. Kroeber, Handbook of the Indians of California, 1925.
12. S. A. Barrett, The Etho Geography of the Pomo and Neighboring Indians, 1923.

County. Vizcaíno, sixty years later, said the harbor of Monterey was surrounded with villages of Indians.[13] In Father Antonio de la Ascension's diary of the Vizcaíno expedition, 1603, it is stated, "The Indians are a well looking, affable people, and very ready to part with anything they have. They are under some form of rule. Their weapons are bows and arrows." They expressed a great deal of concern when they perceived the Spaniards were going to leave them. January 3, 1603, the captain's vessel and tender sailed out of the harbor. There then followed a period of 166 years before those Indians of the Big Trees or their new generations ever again saw any of their white brethern.

Far as we know at present, the true discoverer of the big redwood trees and the remnants of the Costanoan Indians, was Ortega, the scout of the Portolá expedition, 1769. And when Father de Lasuén, in search of a suitable mission site, noted the presence of virgin forests of redwood and pine, they were in their pristine beauty, for the native Indian had taken excellent care of them.[14]

The Costanoan Indians of the Big Basin worshipped the big trees (Sequoia Sempervirens) with a reverence understand-

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13. N. S. Parrish, The early history of the Santa Cruz region. M.A. thesis, 1925.
14. C. A. Engelhardt, Missions and missionaries of California.

able to those who have stood beneath these awe-inspiring living things and look up toward their first branches -- often more than one hundred and fifty feet to the first branch-- and then to their far-off tops, so near the sky that they disappear into a heaven of ocean fog. He, like the Indians who first roamed this paradise, senses the succession of centuries, leaving the place with a feeling of the greatness of the directing spirit of the majestic universe.

Mision Santa Cruz was established in December, 1791. It owned part of San Mateo County, all of the present county of Santa Cruz, and part of Santa Clara County.[15] Father Baldomero Lopez was the first padre. He had jurisdiction over the three million and a half square varas from Stevens Creek on the north to the Pajaro Valley on the south. The green pastures alone consisted of nine square leagues, or about twenty-five square miles.

While the general mission period (1770-1820) is sometimes referred to as "peaceful and pastoral," the Santa Cruz padres had plenty of pastoral experience but the peacefulness was often absent. The closing years of the eighteenth century was a period of turmoil and difficulty.[16] About that

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15. H. A. W. Van Coenen Torchiana, Story of the Mission Santa Cruz.
16. H. H. Bancroft, History of California.

time effort was made to classify the lands under jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz Mission; an official register, dated August 1, 1798, of Engineer Corboba, states that the mission had 3,434,600 square varas of irrigable lands, which included the present park area.[17] He also mentions the nine Indian Rancherias: Wallaumi, Sio Catchmin, Shoremee, Onhi, Choromi, Turami, Payaumin, Shinguermi, and the Hauzaurni. And the Indian rancherias already under conversion of the padres were; the Hulmtac, the Chalsmu and the Hottrochtae. (The latter rancho was the present site of the County Big Trees.)

The nearness of the "Big Trees Wilds" and the mountains, of game, like quail and squirrels and cottontail and deer, had made hunting comparatively easy for the Redwood Indians. Fish in Monterey Bay and the seven big streams of the present park offered other means of subsistence. By various protests from reactionary governors, and Governor Solá's "Law in Branciforte" of 1816;[18] secularization of the mission system in general, by Mexico, 1834, new inroads made by several Hudson Bay trappers and the Spanish settlers who occupied former Indian rancherias, the first humans of the present park area were scattered and the region was ready for the next scene,[19]

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17. A. S. Taylor, Indianology of California, XIII.
18. Santa Cruz Local Items, 1876, translation of Williams.
19. Ibid.

a long chain of pioneer settlers, more trappers, and thence the lumbermen.

In the matter of land-grants and private ranches the records from 1801 to 1822 reveal no change within the mission system or methods. They throw but a faint light on lands actually occupied. According to historians, there is no positive evidence that any lands were yet held by private individuals under any more permanent and proprietary titles than the provisional licenses to occupy, begun in the time of Portola and continued under the successors of Fages.[20] Prior to 1833 there were no grants of adjoining land in the park region.[21] In that year, the first grants in and near the present park area-- formerly Indian rancherias-- were made by the ever-changing Mexican regime. The Aptos Rancho was granted to Rafael Castro, the Soquel Rancho to Martino Castro, the Colabazas Rancho to Felipe Hernandez, and the San Andreas Rancho to Joaquin Castro. These were followed ten years later by San Vicente Rancho, Laguna Rancho, Refugio Rancho, Rincon Rancho, Zayante Rancho, and the San Augustine ranchos.[22] The latter two, the Zayante and San Augustine ranchos, are the locale of the story where the first timber cutting began; followed by

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20. Bancroft, History of California, II.
21. Engelhardt, Missions and missionaries of California.
22. S. H. Willey, History of Santa Cruz.

settlers and "squatters," and the great American industrial period.

Redwood lumber was milled out of the Big Basin region in 1833 by Isaac Graham;[23] followed by Paul Sweet, 1840;[24] Peter Lassen, 1841;[25] Captain Elisa Stephens, 1845;[26] and William W. Waddell in 1851.[27] Evidently these pioneers were attracted into the Santa Cruz Mountains by stories about the missions of Santa Cruz; wealth of minerals, furs, and giant trees of redwood timber to be cut. This was made legally possible by the Decree of August 18, 1824; again in 1828, by the Congress of United Mexico, inviting colonization.

The mission system went into a total eclipse after secularization in 1834, and the days of '49 with their gold and romance left the virgin big trees in the center of the Big Basin still untouched; the Indians ceased to be in possession of land, and the steady stream of settlers and lumbermen increased as California became part of the United States.

The redwoods next attracted the attention of William W. Waddell, (after whom Waddell Creek is named) in 1831, in the southern part of the park area, near old "Williams'

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23. N. L. Parrish, The early history of the Santa Cruz region, M.A. thesis, 1925.
24. E. R. Stanford, California lumbering, M.S. thesis, 1924.
25. Hutchings' California Magazine, February, 1859, 352.
26. G. Comfort, Where rolls the Kern, 118-122.
27. E. S. Harrison, History of Santa Cruz.

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Landing;" and then in the heart of the present park region, 1861. A newspaper of the period stated:[28]

> W. W. Waddell and Co. of Santa Cruz have been engaged, for more than two years last past, in extensive preparations for manufacturing lumber. Their situation is below New Years' Point (Punte del Ano Nueva - discovered by Vizcaino) on the Casa del Ursa, more familiarly known as Waddell's Creek. There are fine bodies of timber around the sources of all streams that flow into the Pacific between Santa Cruz and Pescadero, but the belt of timber upon Waddell's creek is more extensive and compact than any other. This enterprising firm commensed (sic) by building a steam mill, about two and a half miles from the coast, (toward western entrance of present village of the park) and an expensive road between these two points. They also constructed a wharf, into the ocean, which they intended should be a thousand feet long. After this wharf was nearly completed but had not yet reached a depth of water sufficient to admit of loading vessels it was found that a ridge of rock prevented driving piles any farther out into the ocean, and the wharf was abandoned. They then built a road from this wharf along the coast two and a half miles, and from this point commenced the construction of another wharf about 700 feet long. In the construction of these wharves and roads they have used 100,000 feet of lumber, and have expended about $50,000. The lumber was sawed at their mill. The W.W.Waddell & Co. of Santa Cruz has the most extensive lumbering establishment south of San Francisco.

This was the beginning of the twenty-eight sawmills, which, by 1882, extended from the San Lorenzo River on the

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28. Santa Cruz Sentinel, April 16, 1864.

south to the headwaters of Whitehouse Creek on the north, where thirty-four million feet of lumber was cut annually, besides vast quantities of shingles, shakes, posts, railroad ties, pickets, and cordwood.

The success of the Waddell Lumber Company, from 1861 to 1871, was during the infancy of the chain of huge dairies of the Scott's Valley region and the lowlands north of the present park area. Then, too, came the first tourists, over stage lines from San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and the East.

The Archibald Dairy at the entrance of the valley, along Scott's Creek, was famous among eastern sportsmen and tourists by 1870.[29] It was known as a fashionable resort where wealthy big game hunters and anglers went every season from all parts of the country. They arrived each autumn to be outfitted and guided into the heart of the wilds along the upper Berry Creek region and north to the Stevens Creek area for their annual kill of Roosevelt Elk, deer, and grizzly bear. Thus the Big Basin country received its name and early publicity, and the area became a heated issue, almost a feud between the sportsmen and the lumber companies; followed by recreationists and lovers of nature. The twenty-five year campaign of agitation, from 1877 to 1902, for the acquisition of the park

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29. Bancroft, Scraps, Santa Cruz County, 1865-1875.

and to save the redwood trees from further inroads of the timberman, followed.

Following the Civil War (1866) there was a decade of depression which temporarily halted the lumber boom of 1850-1860. Hundreds of thousands of board feet of finished lumber were abandoned on the ground. At the news of the completion of the railroad linking the Atlantic with the Pacific, the demand for redwood lumber increased. In 1879, during construction of the Southern Pacific branch line from San Jose to Santa Cruz, via Los Gatos Pass, the second lumber boom suddenly mushroomed.[30] By 1882, there were twenty-eight large lumber mills within the park area. Each was under direct monopoly of three powerful companies: the Loma Prieta Lumber Company, the Santa Cruz Lumber Company, and Cunningham & Co.[31] Later, through the initiative of H. L. Middleton and the Southern Pacific Company, who were the largest stockholders, the three companies were bought and combined into one powerful unit under the Big Basin Lumber Company of Boulder Creek (1891-1900); as much as 150 carloads of lumber a day were shipped away.

During the lumber decline (1866-1876), other industries forged ahead for progress. Although short-lived,

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30. Santa Cruz Local Items, December 10, 1879.
31. Santa Cruz Sentinel, February 19, 1887.

among these may be mentioned the decade of the whaling and fishing industry, 1858-1868, the gold mining fever of 1877-1879,[32] and the stage coach transportation business; the latter continued in the more remote part of the Santa Cruz Mountains after the completion of the Southern Pacific network in 1879-1880.

Another colorful character of that period was J. H. Hamilton -- known as the "Joaquin Murietta" of the Big Basin. His highway robberies of the stages began in 1869, during the depression. He had much in common with "Mountain Charley" of San Jose - that is, until the former chose the rendezvous trail to the left. In 1871, while resisting arrest on a charge of robbing a Los Gatos-Santa Cruz stage occupied by summer vacationists from the East, he was shot in the arm by "Mountain Charley." Hamilton was then sent, from Santa Clara County, to San Quentin for ten years. But, according to a newspaper item: "--he succeeded in escaping. Was bold enough to return to the big basin region in search of his love." It was said he was a handsome and daring young man and that during his years of "hide out" in the former park area, among the giant hollow trees, he had won the true affection of a mountain beauty, of pioneer stock.

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32. Santa Cruz Local Item, March 19, 1879.

It is said she " -- continued to love him even after it was known that he was a 'robber bold'." Finally the "Joaquin Murietta" of the big trees became utterly reckless. He was captured while promenading with his beloved "Redwood Rose" in the old San Francisco Woodward's Gardens, March 21, 1886.[33]

The controversy between the sportsmen and recreationists of the State and men of the lumber companies became more acute. During those days, it appears, no individual had the pluck to make a direct protest in the newspapers and periodicals, until one day in 1877, during the hunting season, Ralph Sidney Smith saw the fall of a giant California semperviren in the Big Basin.[34] He saw the death of a beautiful big tree through which the sap of life had been flowing a thousand years before the Christian era.

A bed was prepared to receive the tree, any irregularity in the ground being almost certain to cause a break and loss of hundreds of feet of timber. Cuts were made, deep into the heart of the forest giant. Between strokes the chopper listened for the first sign of the tree's fall. First there was a faint ticking, slow, measured. It is known among woodsmen as the "death watch." When it stopped, for possibly

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33. Santa Cruz Sentinel, March 27, 1886.
34. Sierra Club Bulletin, III, June, 1901.

a minute; a faint ocean breeze from up Waddell Creek played for the last time through the leaves of the doomed tree. The breeze lulled. The ticking recommenced. It grew in intensity. Ralph Sidney Smith, watching, felt inspired to spread to the world the call for help. The ticking grew very gradually, for that immense bole stood straight and evenly balanced. The chopper leaped from the staging to the ground. He, too, stood watching. He saw the last act in his work of destruction at a respectful distance; it was unsafe to be too near the tree. Suddenly, Mr. Smith saw a quiver run up the mighty stem, to which every twig and leaf responded. There was a sharp sudden report, heavy as the report of a cannon and sharp as the crack of a rifle. A second and a third followed. The great monarch of the forest swayed. There was a sound like the rush of a whirlwind in the tropics, followed by a stunning crash and jarring of the ground like the passing of an earthquake - and another ugly gap in the present site of the village of Big Basin.

Ralph Sidney Smith, poet, journalist of the Red-wood City Times and Gazette, rushed back to his desk on that memorable autumn day, November 10, 1877. Fired by the spirit of save-the-redwoods, he wrote the first smashing plea on record for a Redwood Park - a protest against the devastation of the big trees by lumber companies. The true beginning of the present California (Big Basin) State Redwood Park, the

oldest park in the state. Smith, soon afterward, was shot dead on the streets of his home town, Redwood City - some thirty years short of seeing his future vision become a reality. Smith's original suggestion was a follows:[35]

> This earth holds few fairer landscapes than that which unveils itself from a thousand points, along the 'ridges' the backbone of our peninsula county. This landscape with its setting of evergreen mountains and fairy valleys, is our treasure trove, our Midas fingers, by which we are to change the floating wealth of the metropolis into coin current, But are we not unmindful of our privileges? Do we not undervalue the riches that lavish handed nature has scattered at our feet, and hung above our heads? Do we ever reflect that the reckless destruction of forest which has gone on without interruption for over twenty years, has stolen the bloom from a hundred lovely dells, that live, as things of beauty, only in the memories of those who knew them in their unshorn youth. Does Pescadero reflect that its ever charming Butano a place where Homer might wander and find new images, where Plato might walk and learn a purer faith, is even now threatened with the vandalism of trade and commerce? Yet what would Pescadero be without its Butano, though its pebble beach were piled high with pearls, and its trout swam ready cooked? The drive from San Mateo past Crystal Springs to Lake San Andreas was once a drive of all drives. Now its beauty is marred by axe and fire, and the brazen sunlight which drags the daintiest charms into the withering glare that robs them of their glamour. But all these wrongs can be righted, if we begin now. Let Pescadero buy the Butano, or, better still, let the counties of Santa Cruz and San Mateo buy it and hold it in

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35. Redwood City Times and Gazette, November 10, 1877.

fee simple for its children's children. And let Redwood City buy Capt. Greer's purple hill sides and robe them anew with a million evergreens. Let our Lathams, our Howards, our Hansons, our Gordans, prove their patriotism and their good taste by saving intact large tracts of growing timber. It will pay in dollars and cents surely, (Valuation during this period was $12 per acre. The suggestion was for 20,000 acres; could have been purchased for $240,000, instead of 1/10th the area at $100, twenty-five years later) and the compound interest of gratitude, which accrues to worthy generosity always....

His whole life appears to have been but the preparation for the accomplishment of this one purpose. His boyhood and school-days were spent in San Mateo County. And as a youth he rambled through the present park area, fished and hunted along the Whitehouse, the Boulder, the Pescadero, the Purisima, the Waddell, and the Lorenzo. He knew and loved every acre of those wilds. For a time he lived in San Francisco. He wrote abundantly and promisingly for daily newspapers and for national weekly and monthly magazines.

In 1880, he was assistant editor of the Argonaut. There he rejected or accepted contributions sent to him by many of the present famous men of letters. Then he wandered far afield under a commission given him by the United States government to gather information relating to industries and flora of the Pacific Coast. His duties took him to Oregon and Washington. He was offered a permanent position at the

Nation's capital, but when the offer came he was traveling in Mexico. His chain of articles descriptive of that country meanwhile appeared in the San Francisco Bulletin. Upon his return he was appointed secretary of the Golden Gate Park Commission. In 1883, he sailed for Honolulu to take charge of the Saturday Press. His editorial administration of that paper was vigorous and successful. His reputation as a writer seemed so well established that George Augustus Sala urged him to go to London. Sala believed that Smith's talents should have a wider field; but the love of his native mountains and canyons of the Santa Cruz region proved the stronger attraction.

He returned, with his young family, to San Mateo County, in 1885, as editor of the Redwood City Times and Gazette.

During all these years however he had remembered the destruction of that big tree, on the November day of 1887. The "ticking" death-watch had haunted him to the end; had spirited him on to make the first broadcast. As editor-in-chief, the project of his youth took immediate and definite shape in his mind. The first gun in his smashing campaign, "Save-the-redwoods" for a park, was an open letter, published in the issue of his paper for December 4, 1886. It was addressed to Leland Stanford, Charles N. Felton, James D. Byrnes, James L. Flood, Frank G. Newlands, Antoine Boree, and others, urging

prevention of timbering within the Big Basin region and the establishment of a State Redwood Park.

Saturday, December 25, 1886, he again made a stirring plea. In 1877, he had at first suggested the Pescadero and Butano canyons. In the latter effort he did not insist upon the choice of any definite site:

> The park project first mentioned in these columns, in an article written by the present editor and published November 10, 1877, has been a long cherished scheme. To more perfectly familiarize himself with the region in which he sought to interest others, he spent two days of the present week in riding through a portion of it. He found the sentiment of the coast, as far as yet aroused, strongly in favor of the park project; and he has yet to hear from anyone that the scheme is other than a good one. More on this topic next week.

In the following week, January 1, 1887, Smith wrote:

> So far as immediate availability is concerned, the Big Basin of the three-pronged Waddell Creek, in the northern part of Santa Cruz County, is fully the equal of the location proposed by us. The rugged grandeur of its hills the dense growth and site of its forests, equal anything, in these States. San Mateo County will not complain if the Big Basin be selected for the site.

Ralph Sidney Smith created an idea and plan back in 1877. It finally took a firm root. Like the majestic redwoods it grew, and by the succeeding months of 1887 the project achieved the widest publicity. Harper's Weekly, the New York Tribune, Scribner's Atlantic Monthly, and other eastern journals com-

mended it.[36] On the Pacific Coast, prominent business men and the press of the State gave it hearty encouragement. But not the least potent factor in arousing interest was Mr. Smith's pamphlet, "The Redwood Reserve Plan: a plan to save portion of the coast redwood forest."[37]

Ralph Sidney Smith's life, however, was rapidly approaching its sudden and tragic end. Within ten days of his death he took a party of gentlemen comprising the State Board of Forestry on a trip into the very heart of the redwood region of Santa Cruz County. On November 29, 1887, ten years after he swore vengeance, and promised aid, for his beloved boyhood giant trees, he was shot in the back - from which wound he died.[38] His assailant was never apprehended.

Thus the original idea and plan for the oldest State Park in California was first conceived; followed by Clark, 1889; the San Francisco Sierra Club, 1896-1899; the Santa Cruz Sentinel, March, 1900; the creation of the California Sempervirens Club, by Andrew P. Hill and others, in May 1900; the original acquisition, 1901; finally the purchase, 1902. Of the latter two, already four histories have been written: Father Kenna, 1900; Taylor, 1912; the Official Guide and Trail

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36. Santa Cruz Sentinel, February 19, 1887.
37. Bancroft Library, Collection of rare manuscripts.
38. San Francisco Bulletin, November 30, 1887.

Booklet, 1924 and Mrs. Andrew P. Hill, 1930.

Under the leadership of Congressman E. A. Haynes, and the Sempervirens Club, 4,000 acres were added about ten years later. After fourteen years' battle with different governors, through the effort of the same club, an appropriation of 70,000 dollars was secured for construction of the San Jose Highway through Saratoga Summit. Meanwhile, acreage of the 200-foot right of way (along the road), was purchased for 7,602 dollars, donated by the Sempervirens Club. With the additional 1,400 acres purchased in 1918-1919, together with odd strips of timber here and there-- from the Whitehouse Creek on the north to Scott's Valley on the south, and to the beach-- together with those various donations by congress and the State of California, the actual acreage of the California (Big Basin) State Redwood Park today is between 12,000 and 13,000 acres.[39]

The present landholders within the park area and along its edge are: starting at a point northeast of China Grade, of Highway No. 44a, where it intersects State Highway No. 42a, in Township 8, Range 3, west (Mt. Diablo meridian); in Section 29; i.e., a section consists of four blocks of

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39. Trip Afield and Records of County Assessor's office, Santa Cruz, January 10-20, 1938.

160 acres each, or 640 acres; across the road-- H. L. Middleton, 82.74 acres; in section 28, Santa Cruz Lumber Company, 439.34 acres, and Earl D. Emrick, 125.6 acres; thence in next "block," directly west and enveloping both highways 42a and 44a, in Section 33, and extending westerly on through Section 4-- along the southern boundary of the park -- into Section 9, of Township 9, South, Range 3, west, is another strip of 400 acres belonging to the late H.D. Middletown. In the same section and the one directly north - in Section 9 and 8, where the Little Basin Road cuts along Scott's Creek and with the Bloom grade -- along Bloom Creek, branch of the Sempervirens Creek, of the Waddell Creek, east fork, are the exclusive 4.5 acres of the California Sempervirens Club, W.R. Bloom's 310 acres and W. D. Eddy's 271.20 acres. Thence along the western boundary of the original 1902 purchase, facing the ocean, through Section 17 and 18, past the Little Basin Road north to the east branch of Waddell Creek, are another 360 acres belonging to the Middleton estate; also the property of George A. Tuck; Fred H. Green, 328 acres; Paul Shoup, 357.50 acres; Norton T. Batkin, Leonard O. Batkin, Ada L. Cridland, 160 acres. To the right -- between Opal Creek branch and East Waddell Creek part of the park-- within the center of the park area, in Section 7, Township 9, south, Range 3, west, are Paul Shoup's 221 acres, and O. L. McAbbe's

72.70 acres.

Farther to the north and along the west branch of Waddell Creek, east past sections of park land, as far as Section 11, Township 9, south, Range 4, west, directly west through Sections 14, 23, 26 and 35-- and on down the incline to the Pacific Ocean, or old Point New Years, where Mr. Waddell more then eighty-five years ago exported his lumber, are the immense holdings of T. J. Hoover, 1,951 acres.

These are some of the present and larger owners or neighbors of the park areas. Other interests along the park boundary are the Western Shore Lumber Company, Section 24, 560 acres, along -side the Hoover ranch and between two small holdings of park land. There are also 1,280 acres belonging to the Coast Counties Gas and Electric Company along Scott's Creek, Section 32, 33 and 29, extending along the edge of the pioneer San Vicente Rancho, and skirting the "S" shape holdings of the latest addition to the park in Section 30 and 31. Other landowners are numerous to the north and east along the boundaries.

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