

HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Edited by Vernon Aubrey Neasham

CARLSBAD BEACH STATE PARK

State Park No. 64

by

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CARLSBAD BEACH STATE PARK

Carlsbad Beach State Park in San Diego County is a beautifully situated stretch of white ocean beach, thirty-four miles north of the city of San Diego. Comprising ten acres of smooth, sheltered bathing beach with a mile long ocean frontage, it lies between the winding lagoon of Agua Hedionda and the town of Oceanside at the mouth of the San Luis Rey Valley.

Overlooking the curving beach and ocean like the town of the same name, a pleasant seaside community noted for its mineral springs and avocado groves. The spring waters have the same mineral properties of those of Carlsbad in Bohemia and from this the place derives its name. Originally Carlsbad was called Frazier's Station, after the small house erected shortly before 1884 by Mr. Frazier, an early settler at the place. During the World War the name was shortened to Carl but after the armistice, the original name was restored.

The earliest discoveries and first settlement on the Pacific Coast of California were made at San Diego Bay 40 miles south of Carlsbad. In 1542 Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in command of two small Spanish sailing vessels discovered San Diego Bay which he named San Miguel. After leaving San

Diego, Cabrillo sailed slowly northward along the coast past the present location of Carlsbad.

No other navigator is known to have explored the San Diego coast again until Sebastián Vizcaíno sixty years after Cabrillo, in 1603, anchored in San Diego Bay and named it for the saint, San Diego de Alcalá. After remaining there to refit his vessels and explore the bay, Vizcaíno also sailed up the California coast passing by Carlsbad Beach.

More than a century and a half elapsed following Vizcaíno's voyage before the Spaniards made any attempt to colonize Alta California. Sailing vessels from the Philippines sailed down the coast but there is no evidence that any of them landed or explored the California coast. Fear that England, Russia or France might encroach upon her possession, Alta California, caused Spain to dispatch an expedition in 1769 to make settlements at San Diego and Monterey.

After an arduous journey by land and sea the expeditionists arrived at San Diego where a mission and presidio were established at Old Town. Two weeks following their arrival a part of the expedition headed by Don Gaspar de Portolá left for Monterey on July 14, 1769. Included in the group which accompanied Portolá were Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada, Sergeant Joseph Francisco Ortega, Lieutenant Pedro Fages, Engineer Miguel Costansó, Fray Juan Crespi, Fray Francisco Gomez, twenty-seven soldiers, six

Catalan volunteers, seven muleteers, two servants and fifteen Christianized Lower California Indians.

The party marched north along the coast, the first white men to traverse this region by land. Their route followed the seashore and on July 16 and 17 they passed by Batequitos Lagoon, Agua Hedionda Creek and the beach later known as Carlsbad. Four days journey from San Diego they made camp several miles north of Carlsbad in the valley where Misión San Luis Rey later was established, then known as San Juan Capistrano.¹ They found a number of Indian rancherias located along the beaches and although they met few of the inhabitants on this stretch of the journey, these appeared to be quite friendly. The Spaniards were attracted by the abundance of flowers along the trail, especially numerous roses much like those of old Castile. The natives had burned large areas of grass to make the capture of rabbits easier. The route followed by Portolá varied little from the later stage and auto road between San Diego and Los Angeles.²

When they came to the vicinity of Monterey the Portolá expedition failed to recognize the territory. Continuing northward in search of the harbor, they proceeded

1. H. H. Bancroft, History of California, I, 140-143.

2. Ibid., 143-145.

as far as San Francisco and made the first discovery of that bay. Discouraged by their failure to locate Monterey, in December Portolá began the return march to San Diego retracing the route they had come along the seacoast.

Determined to find the lost port of Monterey, a second expedition was organized and set out from San Diego April 17, 1769. The party followed much the same route as before, passing along the beach at Agua Hedionda and Carlsbad, which by now were familiar landmarks. They arrived at Monterey on May 24.³ A site for a presidio and mission were selected. San Carlos Borromeo at Monterey was the second mission to be established in California. Thereafter the trail between San Diego and Monterey over the beaches of Carlsbad and Oceanside knew the frequent tread of missionary friars, Spanish soldiers, colonists and Indian neophytes. It became known as El Camino Real and with the establishment of other missions eventually extended from San Diego to Sonoma.

In October, 1775 a small company composed of Friar Lasuén, Lieutenant Ortega, a sergeant and some soldiers started from San Diego over this route to establish another mission, San Juan Capistrano, between San Diego and San Gabriel. On October 30, eight days after the establishment of

3. T. L. Ford, Dawn and the dons, 41-50.

San Juan Capistrano a courier arrived from San Diego with news of an Indian uprising which destroyed the mission at San Diego. On receiving the sad news, work at the new mission was suspended. Lieutenant Ortega, the sergeant, priests and soldiers hurried back to San Diego.⁴

About the same time, Juan Bautista de Anza bringing the colonists for San Francisco from Sonora to Monterey arrived at Misión San Gabriel and there learned details of the San Diego uprising. Abandoning his plan to push on with the colonists to Monterey, Anza left them at San Gabriel and with Pedro Font, Don Fernando Rivera and some soldiers went to the aid of San Diego. In Anza's California expeditions, H. E. Bolton wrote:⁵

The road followed was essentially that opened by Portolá six years before, and now a well beaten trail. The first camp was made at Santa Ana River, the second at La Quena, near the abandoned mission of San Juan Capistrano, the third at San Luis Rey River (then called San Juan Capistrano) and the fourth at La Soledad (near Sorrento.) Early on the fifth day San Diego was reached.

After giving what assistance he could to the San Diego colony, Anza left Rivera at San Diego and made arrangements to return to San Gabriel. The mission there was short of provisions and a pack train with supplies was sent at once.

4. C. A. Engelhardt, Misión San Juan Capistrano, 3-7.

5. H. E. Bolton, Anza's California expeditions, I, 346.

On the return journey to San Gabriel Anza took the same route as before arriving there on February 12.

A year later on November 1, 1776, Misión San Juan Capistrano was reestablished at the original site. With this new addition to the mission chain, the southern portion of the old Portolá trail became more widely traveled than before. During mission years El Camino Real was the route used by almost everyone passing up the coast.

On their expeditions up and down the coast the Spaniards had encountered a considerable native population living along the shores and in the neighboring country. After the establishment of missions at San Diego, San Gabriel and Monterey many of them became christianized by the padres. Although some of the Indians from the areas around San Luis Rey, present day Carlsbad and Oceanside came under the influence of Misión San Juan Capistrano and San Diego, the padres were too overburdened to administer to the needs of the natives of this entire area. The result was that these natives remained more or less free of mission influence until the establishment of Misión San Luis Rey, de Francia in 1798, inland from the coast and about three and a half leagues from Carlsbad.

Of the beginning of San Luis Rey, Engelhardt, wrote in his book "San Luis Rey."⁶

6. C. A. Engelhardt, San Luis Rey de Francia, the king of the missions, 3.

The need of a mission between San Diego and San Juan Capistrano was recognized at an early date. Between these two points lay many Indian rancherias; and, as the reader will have learned from the narrative on Mission San Diego, the over-burdened Fathers of this mission were frequently called to the outlying rancherias in order to minister to the sick. Moreover the distance between San Diego and San Juan Capistrano could not be covered in a day, a fact which made traveling very unsafe. Finally, on July 23, 1795 Governor Diego Borica issued an order directing Ensign Juan Pablo Grijalva to examine the territory for a suitable site.

The location selected for the new mission was in the valley of San Juan Capistrano which Friar Juan Crespí had pointed out as a favorable mission site when passing that way with the Fortolá expedition in July, 1769. It was a little inland from the coast and about three and a half leagues from the beach at Carlsbad.

San Luis Rey owned several wealthy ranches. The land extending from the seashore at Carlsbad and Agua Hedionda belonged to the estate of the mission proper. Many natives inhabited rancherias along the beach at Carlsbad. These tribes belonged to a large nation called Luiseños who dwelt in the territory which is now San Diego County. Those who lived on the coast were Maritime in their habits, subsisting chiefly on shell fish, mollusks and other sea fish which they were adept at catching. Other food consisted of deer, rabbits, squirrels, rats, acorns and seeds which the women gathered. The beach and ocean at Carlsbad were extremely rich in sea fish, clams

and water fowl. Often Indians from the interior and mountain regions came down to the sea shore to procure them.

The natives of this region were quite friendly towards the Spaniards. They never showed any hatred toward the padres and were easily won over by them. Christianized, they were taught many useful trades, carpentry, weaving, agriculture, etc. San Luis Rey was the most magnificent of all the missions. During the first ten years of its existence it made more converts than any other and by 1818 was the most prosperous of all the missions.⁷ Even after secularization San Luis Rey prospered, but in time it too declined. The Indian population became disorganized and their numbers decreased rapidly, great inroads being made by diseases and evil practices introduced by the white settlers.

After its secularization many claims were made upon the ranches and property of San Luis Rey. On May 18, 1846 the mission and its immediate acreage was sold to José A. Cot and José A. Pico for \$2,437. Later they were dispossessed by General Fremont and failed to regain possession. The native population declined rapidly as more and more white people came and gradually abandoned their homes, only a few scattering ones remaining after 1850.

7. F. T. Cooper, Rider's California, 532.

After mission days were on the wane, during Mexican days, the old Portolá trail via Carlsbad Beach and Agua Hedionda remained the chief route of travel from San Diego north to Los Angeles and Monterey. Many splendid California horsemen and ox drawn carretas traveled that way. The road that joined the missions was also the connecting link between the great ranchos along the way. Even after 1850, for a number of years the population remained predominately Mexican, and it was some time before white people settled at Carlsbad in any great numbers.

Until its settlement shortly before 1884 Carlsbad Beach was chiefly a route of travel for parties passing up the coast. The beach served the natives as a fishing and hunting ground and a pleasant location for their rancherias. During Spanish and Mexican days the Californians also swam, hunted, fished and held barbecues and picnics there. Its actual settlement did not occur until 1884 when a Mr. Frazier erected a small house opposite the location of the present Carlsbad Hotel and the place became known as Frazier's Station. Between 1884 and 1886 several families took up farming land and settled in the vicinity; the Pattersons, McCulloughs, McCrays, Mulls and Wrights. Mr. Frazier drilled a well on his land and discovered the water had mineral properties which were beneficial to his health. In 1886-1887

Mr. G. Schutte and Mr. Wordsworth had the water analyzed and it was found that it contained the identical properties of the world-famous mineral water of Carlsbad, Bohemia. The interest of three other men, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Smith and Mr. Titus was enlisted by Mr. Schutte and Mr. Wordsworth. The Carlsbad Land and Mineral Water Company was formed and a townsite laid out called Carlsbad. Wells were dug on the Frazier place and the water piped to the townsite. A large hotel and an inn were built to accommodate tourists and health seekers. During this period a number of new settlers came to Carlsbad to make their homes.⁸

After the boom period of 1887-1888, Carlsbad suffered a temporary lull in its development. During the next decade its population and activity declined. The Carlsbad Land and Mineral Water Company failed.

In 1914 the South Coast Land Company purchased the remainder of the property with some other land adjoining. A good water supply was secured to insure the cultivation of crops. New interest was awakened and many new comers settled in Carlsbad, attracted by its excellent climate, fertile soil, and beautiful location on the ocean. During recent years its growth and prosperity has been continuous. The soil and climate have been found excellent for the production of winter

8. C. H. Heilbron, History of San Diego County, 314.

vegetables, citrus fruits, avocados, bulbs and flowers.

Much of Carlsbad's charm and prosperity is due to its situation on the ocean and its excellent beach. From earliest days it has served as a popular recreational area for its residents as well as many tourists. In 1933 the state purchased ten acres of beach land from the Southern Coast Land Company for the purpose of a state park. Consisting of land valued at 45,000 dollars, this park reserves for public use one of the most beautiful of California beaches. Fishing, surf bathing, and hiking are among the recreational pursuits to be enjoyed here. The park also has a pleasant picnic area.

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CARLSBAD BEACH STATE PARK

(Summary by Lois Ann Woodward)

Carlsbad Beach State Park is situated in the northern part of San Diego County between the winding lagoon of Agua Hedionda and the town of Oceanside. It comprises ten acres of hard, smooth beach with a mile long ocean frontage. Overlooking the curving beach and ocean lies the town of the same name, a pleasant seaside community noted for its mineral springs and avocado groves. The spring waters have the same mineral properties as those of Carlsbad in Bohemia and from this the place derives its name.

In 1769, an expedition was dispatched from Mexico under the command of Don Gaspar de Portola to establish settlements at San Diego and Monterey. After the settlement had been made at San Diego the party marched northward along the coast to establish the second colony at Monterey. Their route followed the seashore and on July 16 and 17 they passed by Batequitos Lagoon, Agua Hedionda Creek and the beach later known as Carlsbad. They found numerous Indian villages located along the beaches and vicinity. After their failure to find the port of Monterey, Portola retraced their former route via Carlsbad on the return trip.

Determined to find Monterey, a second expedition set out from San Diego April 17, 1769. Again they passed by the beach at Agua Hedionda and Carlsbad, which now were familiar landmarks. After the establishment of Monterey, this trail over the beaches of Carlsbad and

Oceanside was frequently traveled by the missionary priests, Spanish soldiers, colonists and Indian neophytes.

A considerable Indian population lived at Carlsbad Beach and in the vicinity. The need of another mission between San Juan Capistrano and San Diego early was realized. In 1798, Misión San Luis Rey was established about three and a half leagues from Carlsbad. Extending to the seashore the lands of the mission proper included Carlsbad Beach. The Indians of the region were easily won over by the padres and soon San Luis Rey was the most splendid of all the missions. After secularization it prospered for a time but eventually declined; the Indian population became disorganized and gradually disappeared.

Carlsbad was first settled in 1884 when a Mr. Frazier erected a small house which became known as Frazier's Station. Water on the Frazier place was analyzed and discovered to have the same mineral properties as the world famous mineral water of Carlsbad, Bohemia. Several people became interested in it and in 1887-1888 the Carlsbad Land and Mineral Company was formed and a townsite laid out. During this period a number of new settlers came to Carlsbad to make their homes. For a decade after the boom Carlsbad suffered a decline in activity and population and the Carlsbad Land and Water Company failed.

In 1914, the South Coast Land Company purchased the remainder of the property with some other land adjoining. Many new comers settled in Carlsbad attracted by its excellent climate, fertile soil and beautiful location on the ocean. In 1933, the state purchased ten acres of beach land from the South Coast Land Company for the purpose of a state park.

Fishing, surf bathing and hiking are among the recreational pursuits to be enjoyed in one of the most beautiful of California Beach Parks.

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Carlsbad Beach State Park in the northern part of San Diego County comprises ten acres of hard, smooth ocean beach, with a mile long ocean frontage. It lies between the lagoon of Agua Hedionda and Oceanside. Fishing, surf bathing and hiking may be enjoyed here. Adequate picnic grounds also are available.