

Human Relations to the Hastings Reaervation in the Past
[with information on land use and its influence on vegetation]
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A naturalist in the northern Santa Lucia Mountains is soon likely to want to know how people have affected the land, the plants, and the animals. This involves an inquiry into past human occupation of the land, both the immediate area and the surrounding region. Kinds of human occupation that have significance in reaching an understanding of the Reservation include at least four distinguishable periods, each characterized by different groups of people: Indians, European explorers, Spanish missionaries, and American settlers. Descendants of the last group still remain and the coming of more recent inhabitants has not changed greatly the relations between people and the land in this vicinity. More rapid transportation in recent years has brought more people but usually for only short periods of time.

Establishment of Hastings Reservation with as complete protection from artificial disturbance as can be provided makes it possible to observe the conditions on undisturbed land. The records and conclusions from them should be useful to persons who want to live on, and make a living from land similar to that being studied. It represents a large proportion of the grassland of the foothills and coastal mountains in California. The incidents recounted here are sufficient to indicate how varied and widespread have been the contacts between this small area and people from distant regions. Sometimes these casual contacts have resulted in permanent changes in the plant or animal life of the area.

Stone mortars and pestles picked up and carried to the homes of early settlers, along with arrows found in the canyons, are reminders that, before permanent settlements of white people were established, the area was occupied by Indians at least a part of the time. In the middle of the road just outside the main gate of the Reservation an Indian mortar was recently uncovered by floodwaters from a creek. Apparently it has never been moved from the site where it was made and used. The ground there is fairly level and both water and acorns must have been available conveniently near by in proper season.

The Indian population in the vicinity of the Hastings Reservation must have been small and nomadic. Acorns could not have been available continuously in large amount, and berris, seeds,

roots and meat must have been scarce except in seasons of special abundance. No doubt areas nearer the coast and at lower altitudes provided much better subsistence for the more permanent settlements.

Moving bands of Indians might well have visited regularly the location of the Reservation for the most easily accessible way across the Santa Lucia Mountains leads over it. Temporary camps would likely have been occupied here for much the same reasons that the white settlers stopped at the same sites. A difference was that the Indians were accustomed to moving on to new spots when food supplies ran low.

Monterey Bay was first sighted by a European in 1542. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, exploring for the Spanish government, followed the Californian coast northward as far as the Russian River. In 1602, on December 15, Sebastian Viscaino, also a Spanish explorer, reached and named Monterey Bay and the Carmelo River. It was not until 1769 that Junipero Serra and his general, Portola made the overland expedition from Mexico to Monterey.

The years 1769 to 1824 are known as the Spanish or Mission Period in California. The principal mission was at Carmel and the civil capital was at Monterey. At least three missions were located close to the northern Santa Lucia Mountains. One trail connecting them and the shortest one likely to be used, crosses the Reservation and in general corresponds with the road now used over the mountains in this region. An important series of events connected with this period was the introduction of numerous plant species which have become established and prominent in the vegetation of California.

In June 1771 the Carmel Mission was moved to its present site on the lower Carmel River. In July was founded the Mission of San Antonio de Padua. Twenty years later, in 1791, the gap between these two was closed by the establishment of the Mission of Nuestra Senora de la Soledad. This thirteenth mission being situated in a district not naturally suited for habitation by Indians proved unsuccessful. It has been described as "the gloomiest, bleakest, and most abject-looking spot in all California." The movable property was taken in 1834 to San Antonio. The mission here was in a more favorable spot.

Among the French explorers who visited the coast in this region was Jean Francois Galaup de la Perouse who traveled on the frigates Boussole and Astrolabe and landed at Monterey on

September 14p 1766. He remained in the vicinity for ten days and his report contains plates of the valley quail and California thrasher. Naturalists with him were de Lamanon, de la Martiniere, and Dufresne. The voyage of Auguste Duhant-Cilly, in 1827 and 1828, brought the Italian scientists Polo Emilio Botta to Monterey as well as to other Californian coastal ports, Abel du Petit-Thouars, who sailed in the frigate Venus to investigate the whale fisheries, was at Monterey in October and November, 1837.

Explorers from England contributed most to discoveries in California natural history before 1850, and much of the collecting was done in the vicinity of the port of Monterey, Frederick William Beechey visited the ports of San Francisco and Monterey in 1826, and again in 1827. His naturalist, George T. Lay, and a number of his officers, especially Alexander Collie, the surgeon, and Edward Belcher, the surveyor, collected specimens and made observations. Collie kept a journal which included records of dissections of animals. Belcher, Evans and Smythe also kept unpublished journals. The zoological report on the results of this voyage was edited by John Richardson and published in 1839 in London. The botanical report was edited by J. W. Hooker and G. A. W. Arnott. It was issued in 1841, also in London.

Early naturalists who visited the Santa Lucia Mountains resembled the Indians in being wanderers, but they came from much greater distances, mainly from Europe. Thomas Coulter arrived at Monterey from Lower California in 1831, and stayed in California for three years. He discovered the Coulter pine and Santa Lucia fir. David Douglas collected in the region about Monterey in 1831 and 1832. He was a Scotch horticulturist whose California journals have been lost. While in the state he collected 500 specimens of plants and prepared a few birds and mammals. Karl Theodore Hartweg arrived in Monterey on June 7, 1846. He found the Santa Lucia fir and attempted to get seeds. He returned to England with extensive plant collections in 1848.

Early agricultural development of the land now within the Reservation involved any slight modification from the original conditions. First settlers who came between 1850 and 1860 were able almost to get their entire subsistence off the land. Horses and cattle were kept in small numbers. Later hogs and a few sheep were kept for short intervals. Small patches of ground were plowed and a few crops, oats and gyp corn, were planted. These with small gardens and orchards of fruit trees and some grapes represented the whole agricultural effort.

At first the area was productive enough to support numerous persons, but increasing numbers of people overtaxed the resources. Especially significant was the discovery that the water available on the surface was insufficient for the use at first anticipated. The seasonal drying of streams and the disappearance of springs required less and less intensive use of the area. Finally the stage was reached where parts of it were deserted by the owners and left to be used by neighbors who remained.

The first homesteader within the Reservation boundaries was John Scott, who built a cabin at the present site of the headquarters. He also by hand made the beams and lumber for and constructed a barn which still stands and is in fair condition. Its handmade character has persisted despite repairs.

Scott lived alone here until he sold the tract to Burritt Cahoon. He then remained on the place and for a short time worked for the Cahoons. Mr. Cahoon built another house, about 1899 the nucleus of the oldest dwelling now occupied on the Reservation. Later when his health did not permit his doing the work his family of grown boys attended to the cattle, the wood cutting, and growing of hay. The boys cleared a large area of blue oaks in 1901, but the ground was soon covered again with a stand thicker than the original one. For a time, he had twelve to fifteen sheep.

Additions to the ranch were made by purchase from Chas. R. Robertson and from a bachelor brother, C. S. (Charlie) Cahoon, who homesteaded tracts in the neighborhood and built the cabin on Finch Creek, in later years occupied by an Indian wood cutter and known as Pat's Cabin. Stovewood and fence posts were cut in locations conveniently accessible for this spot.

Burritt Cahoon supplemented income from his ranch by serving as Deputy County Assessor, a duty carried on to the present by his son Burritt. With the departure of his sons to work elsewhere, Cahoon moved from the neighborhood, but retained ownership of the land. One renter in this period, Andy Martin, who was foreman on the adjacent Bishop Ranch had sheep which grazed, at least over Red Hill and possibly elsewhere on Reservation land.

In 1925 the land was purchased by J. H. Gross, owner of a laundry in Salinas. He did not actually live here, but kept cattle and hired workmen to look out for them. The brand was transferred to Russell Platt Hastings in 1929 when the place was purchased by Mrs. Hastings.

The Arnold place was added to provide a sufficient water supply. Within a year a new use developed when the Carmel Valley Ranch School was moved to the vicinity, and a 16-acre tract near the ranch headquarters was sold to Miss Helen L. Lisle. While the school was operated, increased numbers of people and horses occupied the land adjacent to it. In 1943 this tract became a part of the Reservation.

The southern part of the Reservation, comprising two hundred acres now known as the Arnold Place, was occupied by the family of Henry Arnold after about 1900. The house now standing was built by the Arnolds close to and below the spring, the site being selected by Mrs. Arnold as most accessible to the water supply. The flat, on higher ground, was cleared, fenced, and farmed for hay. Wood for fuel came from this clearing and from cleaning up all freshly fallen trees and limbs. Additional land was homesteaded by a son, Robert Leyden Arnold. A daughter married Lee Stanley Cahoon in 1906 and has lived since then in the upper part of Finch Creek Canyon. Mr. Arnold continued to occupy the home place for a part of the time after the departure of the rest of the family.

The Arnold Place has never been accessible by regular wagon or automobile road. At first the school, on Robertson Creek, was reached by a trail which led also to other ranches in Finch Creek Canyon and Big Canyon. By 1943 the trail to Finch Creek was practically indistinguishable from paths made by cattle and deer. Supplies were hauled in originally by horse-drawn sled over a steep trail from Jamesburg. In recent years this part of the Reservation has been reached from the headquarters over a road wide enough only for a narrow-gauge wagon. The whole area thus has remained relatively inaccessible and correspondingly undisturbed except by fire and stock. Some of the flowers and trees planted nearly fifty years ago still grow about the house.

Mr. John James came to this neighborhood in 1869 from North Carolina and first lived at the Badasci place. The family then lived along Cachagua Creek on land adjacent to the Reservation on the west and now a part of the Lambert ranch. A flood between Christmas and New Year in the winter of 1889, a year of exceptionally high rainfall, carried away the barn dairy building, and part of the orchard. The family home was reestablished at the site of Jamesburg. All that remains to mark the old homesite is a single remaining almond tree. This land was later owned by a daughter, Mrs. Nellie Chew, and then was sold to the Lambert family.

The Sam Gordon family first lived on the site of the Lewis house, now the Search Ranch, and then settled on the site of the present Blomquist Ranch, to the west of the Reservation, and for a time conducted a sheep ranch there. For many years, this ranch has been used for cattle raising, with some cultivation mainly for planting oat and barley hay. This repeated breaking of the soil has affected lower Big Creek, where it runs through the Reservation, by the more than ordinary amount of water run off and the increased cutting of its load of sand. This ranch contains 12,000 acres now operated for growing beef cattle, but one point of special significance for the Reservation is the effective protection from hunting that has been enforced there for a long time. This helps to maintain a reservoir of the larger wide-ranging birds and mammals, but it is counteracted in part by the currently observed practice of poisoning ground squirrels. This has affected animal populations on adjacent Reservation land in several known instances.

Smith Brothers were the original Spanish settlers on the land now occupied by the Cahoons, to the south and east from the Reservation. One of the three brothers lived where the L. S. Cahoon family now lives. They were paid \$500 for the privilege of filing on land by Charles W. Finch in 1861. Later, they were crowded out of the vicinity by increasing numbers of homesteaders and by losses in an extremely dry year (1877) when about 400 head of their cattle died from starvation on account of the drouth. Mr. Finch, whose family came from Scotland, and settled in Connecticut, worked as a molder in a foundry in New York, and then with his brother James, came to Monterey in 1858 and started a hotel. Prosperity of the farmers who came to town impressed him so that he decided to become one of them, and he set out to find land for himself. He first considered taking land in the lower Salinas Valley, but was discouraged by the dense "twelve-foot high" stands of mustard growing there and discarded that prospect for the more open slopes of the mountains. He settled on and continued to occupy the place which is now the home of his grandson, L. S. Cahoon. The early activity on this land was horse raising; cattle were brought later. Some areas were fenced off and the included wild oats was cut for hay. The only plowing was for a garden. Later some barley was planted. Hogs were allowed to run free.

Of interest here is the account by William H. Brewer of a visit to this vicinity at the end of May, 1861, as extracted from his Journal (Farquhar, 1930:108). After his return to camp near Monterey, on the evening of June 4, Brewer wrote, as follows: "We were ready early Tuesday morning, May 28, for a start. Up at daylight--Averill, Peter, and a buccaroo for a guide--saddlebags packed, and two pack-mules. Sleepy with blankets and some meat, coffeepots, and

bread; Stupid with more blankets. frying pans, and more provisions. We followed a trail about three miles, then struck the road up the Carmelo Valley. We stopped at a house half an hour to wait for Charley, the bucaroo, to overtake us. He had been to town for bread for the trip. Mrs. McDougal, where we stopped, insisted on our drinking a pan of milk, which we did, then struck up the valley.

"We followed the road about twenty miles. Five ranches were passed; Some barley fields along the river, and wild oats in abundance on the hills, supporting many cattle. We lunched at a stream, saddled, and were again off. Here we left the road' and for fifteen miles followed trails, now winding along a steep hillside --steep as a Gothic roof the stones form the path bounding into a canyon hundreds of feet below--now now through a wide stretch of wild oats, now through a deep canyon. We passed two more ranches, where cattle are raised among the hills, and at last struck through a rocky canyon, in which flowed a fine stream, with some glorious old trees. Before dark we arrived at a small ranch owned by a man named Finch, with whom Charley *was* acquainted' *We* camped near, and slept well, for we had been ten and a half hours in the saddle in thirteen hours. We frightened up four fine deer just as we went into camp.

"Peter and Averil had each bought a Sharp's for hunting, so on Wednesday they tried for deer, I climbed the mountain for Geology. First I passed through a wild canyon, then over hills covered with oats, with here and there trees- oaks and pines. Some of these oaks were noble ones indeed. How I wish one stood in our yard at home. One species, called "encina", with dark green foliage, was not extra fine, but another, "el roble", was very fine. [note: The first, "encina", is the coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) the second, "el roble", is the valley oak (*Quercus lobata*)] I measured one of the latter, with wide spreading and cragged branches, that was twenty-six and a half feet in circumferences Another had a diameter of over six feet, and the branches spread

over seventy feet each way. I lay beneath its shade a little while before going on. Two half-grown deer sprang up close to me, but got out of pistol shot before I, in my flurry, had the pistol ready. Up, still up, I toiled, got above the grass and oats and trees into the chaparral that covers the high peaks. I struck for the highest peaks, but backed out before quite reaching it, for the traces of grizzlies and lions became entirely too thick for anything like safety. Both are very numerous here. Finch killed three a few days before we arrived.

"But what a magnificent view I had! A range of hills two thousand to three thousand feet high extends from Monterey to Soledad. It is a part of the mountains, yet there is a system of valleys behind, up which we had passed. The Carmelo River follows this, a part of the way. I was higher than these hills. Over them, to the northwest, lay the Bay of Monterey, calm, blue, and beautiful. Beyond were blue mountains, dim in the haze; to the east was the great Salinas plain, with the mountains beyond, dim in the blue distance. In the immediate foreground was the range of hills alluded to as the Palo Scrito, in some places covered with oats, now yellow and nearly ripe, in others black with chaparral. Behind lay a wilderness of mountains, rugged, covered with chaparral, forbidding, and desolate. They are nearly inaccessible, and a large region in there has never been explored by white men.

"I returned by the same way I had come up. Here is a most beautiful tree I had not seen before, with foliage something like but even richer than the magnolia--it is a kind of manzanita. It would be splendid in cultivation in a mild climate". [The madrona is *Arbutus menziesii*]

"Averill and Peter returned without any venison, but Averill brought in an enormous rattlesnake, by far the biggest we have yet seen. He was huge and, Averill says, decidedly savage when wounded. He was four and a half feet long, as thick as one's arms, and had twelve rattles. His head was over an inch and three-quarters broad, with mouth corresponding. I cut out one of his fangs as a specimen".

"We spent an hour in Mr. Finch's house that evening. Two brothers, Americans, have a ranch, and are raising horses. Mrs. Finch seemed a meek, sad woman, with more culture and sensibility than her husband, and evidently pining for other lands and other scenes here in this lonely place, away from the world, almost away from the 'rest of mankind.' The house was of sticks plastered with mud- the floor of earth. Two pretty little girls were playing upon a grizzly skin before the fire. It is a lonely life they lead there. [the two brothers were Charles W. and James Finch. The latter married Ellen O'Neil, daughter of Major John M, O'Neil who came to California in 1847 with Stevenson's Regiment.] The tract, now owned by Mrs. Chris Melin and occupied [1943] by two of her sisters, which joins the Reservation on the east, was originally a part of the ranch owned by her grandfather, Mr. John Robertson. The house now occupied was built in 1870. The family had sheep and cattle and kept a cheese maker who operated a cheese house. In some years it was hard to obtain food in sufficient variety and amount, and in the exceptionally dry season of 1877 it was necessary to depend partly upon acorns. Originally the

family lived where headquarters of the Forsman Ranch now stand. A son, Charles R, Robertson, in 1884, took up by homestead a part of the present Reservation. Robertson Creek which is partly in the Reservation and which contributes importantly to the variety of habitat in the vicinity received its name from this family. This land has at various times been pastured by cattle, horses, and hogs.

John Robertson in 1869 owned a much larger ranch which extended over the divide toward the east and included the Palo Escrito hill. He raised cattle. In the succession of owners have been William Tibbets, Austin Smith, Bernardo Badasci, Thomas B, Bishop Company, and Stanton W, Forsman, the present occupant. This place was purchased by the Bishop Company in 1916 and sold in 1935. Various tracts were added to it in that interval. One of these, including the Palo Escrito was bought from Andy Martin. He intended to raise horses, though he never actually tried this. A man named Connally lived in a house up the creek from the present ranch buildings. Members of the Bishop family used the place for hunting and shooting by themselves and others, but cattle were kept there also. the intention was to keep 400 head and there were never more than that number.

In Reservation records the largest hill within the boundaries is designated Poison Oak Hill. For a time it was known as Windecker Hill because a man by that name lived there from about 1872 to 1878. Besides traces of his cabin near the junction of Finch and Robertson creeks, there remain fairly conspicuous indications of a system of trenches which he constructed as barriers to the wandering cattle. Another early settler on this hill occupied a cabin on a flat above a spring in Robertson Creek Canyon. Later the land was owned by a nonresident named Tom Graves who lived at Gonzales and Salinas, and for three or four years by a Mr. Craig from Blanco. The hill is still commonly called Craig Mountain. Within the last fifteen years a considerable area near the top of the hill was cleared of large valley oaks which were made into fence posts. Two springs were developed for use by cattle.

Except for the ditch barriers just mentioned all the early fences in this vicinity were brush fences composed of branches cut and placed as barriers. The fence which was rebuilt in 1941 on the boundary between the Reservation and the Melin place was originally built by Charlie and L. S. Cahoon. More than half the original boundary fences of the Reservation have now been rebuilt.

A few homesteaders' cabins in the neighborhood were built of pine logs, but these were at sites where the logs were easily accessible. The first one was the Bruce cabin. Another was the Charles Finch cabin built where the Cahoon windmill now stands. Other cabins and houses were built of lumber hauled in from Monterey for that purpose. Finch sawed with a whipsaw the lumber for the barn now used on the Cahoon place. He cut the pines from a hill close by. No other sawing of lumber has been done in the vicinity.

Fires in this neighborhood have been small ones with two exceptions. About 1892 a fire was started by B. Badasci, in upper Anastasia Canyon "to make good deer pasture". The fire spread beyond expected limits and extended to Chews Ridge, the Koster place, and to Bruce's cabin. The only big fire in this section, in early August 1928, started above Fosters, possibly set accidentally by a local resident. It burned as far as the Abbott Ranch and back to Chews Ridge, where it destroyed the lookout tower. Effects of these fires upon the vegetation are still discernible. More recent small fires which affected the Reservation were the one which burned the south side of Haystack Hill on July 25, 1937, two caused by lightning on the flat west of the Arnold Place on August 22, 1939, and one which came from the southeast base of School Hill in January 1940. The last two came only to the boundary of the Reservation.

Early settlers in the vicinity were able to file on three kinds of claim- homestead, preemption, and timber, each of 160 acres. A family of several members could thus acquire enough of these 480-acre units to make a fair-sized cattle ranch. Numerous transfers by sale or inheritance soon resulted in the large ranches of the present time.

The L. S. Cahoon ranch, adjacent to the Reservation, may be considered as a sample of carrying capacity for the neighborhood. At present on the 2500 acres 250 cattle are kept. Usually about fifty calves are raised each year and an equal number of beef sales are made. For six months, beginning April, seventy-five cattle are run on the National Forest. Once, three-year old steers were sold for \$12, In 19439 two-year-olds brought \$120. Twenty-five or thirty years earlier, however, the same acreage supported a third more cattle than it does now.

A change in vegetation observed in portions of the neighborhood has been the extensive covering of the once grass-filled spaces between the scattered valley oaks by thick stands of blue oak and coffee berry. At least a part of this growth took place before the big fires swept over the land. It came with the great reduction in amount of forage for cattle. Another observation,

possibly also related to grazing, has been the absence over large sections of any new young valley oaks. A conspicuous stand of young valley oaks on Haystack Hill was cut and the land plowed soon after purchase of the place by the Cahoons.

A dense patch of small blue oaks on the Cahoon ranch was cut in 1898. These trees were only six to ten feet high. They were cut at ground level and sprouts were sent up from the stumps immediately. Now, forty-five years later, these trees, which are all under six inches in diameter, are being cut again for firewood/ Past observations here support the belief that trees of this kind cut above the ground level die instead of sprouting. A stand of blue oaks similar to this one now standing on the north side of School Hill came up from a clearing made about 1902. Blue oaks cut in 1901 on adjacent, lower slopes of the hill died and the land was farmed for many years.

Gullies and deep cuts now conspicuous in many of the fields and clearings were absent in early years after first settlement. The creeks had low banks with only small amounts of brush in the open sections of the canyons' thus permitting easy travel along them on horseback and even with a light wagon. Mr. Cahoon remembers that Finch Creek dried up in 1896 when great numbers of fish died, and again about 1930, but that it usually ran continuously, through the year, before that.

Game has contributed importantly to the living of many persons in this region. More than sixty years ago one local resident called Rocky Beasley killed many deer, from which he sold the hides. More recently hunters, fishermen, and vacationers have come to the mountains in sufficient numbers to provide an appreciable share of the annual income on certain of the ranches. The mountains are used for this purpose by many more people than use them for any other purpose, but not many of these visitors stay for more than a few days. Hunting has been mainly for deer with a little shooting of quail and band-tailed pigeons. It has been chiefly for sport though most of the meat was used for food, and almost none was for market.

Presence of rodent disease in this area has affected slightly the lives of people living here. This has come from caution not to handle squirrels or to eat them, from the knowledge that they might have plague. About 1924 plague was discovered on the C. W. Cahoon ranch near the Paloma School. No plague-infected squirrels were found on the west side of the divide. However, the squirrels disappeared from both places at about the same time; and in some spots where they died off, no increase in numbers has been detected in the succeeding twenty years.

Chronology of human use of land within the Hastings Reservation

- 1860 Survey of Rancho Tularcitos boundary.
- 1861 Visit by W.H.Brewer to ranch of Charles W. and James Finch.
- 1863 John Scott`, first homesteader on area of Reservation
- 1877 Survey by John Gilcrest.
- 1884 Homestead granted (160 acres) to Charles R..Robertson.
- 1900 Henry Arnold family moved to spring and built house.
- 1925 Brand Registration to J. H. Gross.
- 1929 Brand transferred to R. P. Hastings
- 1930 Survey of school lot.
- 1933 Survey of Sec. 4 by Cozzens and Davies.
- 1937 Reservation established
- 1943 School lot added to Reservation.