

Aptos

# Lonely coyote's plaintive cry can still be heard in Aptos

11/8/73

By VINCENT T. LEONARD

Before George Sill, who then owned the property, hired the Toney brothers to plant the hillside and hilltop just east of the Loma Linda Lodge to pines, the top was a grainfield, the hillside, a pasture.

The wide, sweeping saddle of the hill along the southern edge of the old oak grove that now borders Cabrillo Highway attracted year after year, at every full moon, a coyote who found the crest at that point, a wonderful

place to bay the moon. His long, lonely wail sent shivers up my spine as I pulled my little wagon around Aptos delivering milk. It didn't help my nerves, either, to look back to see him, long "mouth" agape, silhouetted against the disc of the rising moon.

We probably should have been grateful for the coyote's presence, for during his visits the number of jackrabbits who raised havoc with our wheat crop on the hilltop dropped perceptibly.

But the coyote did not confine himself to a jackrabbit diet; so any gratitude we might have felt for him, was lost in cold fury when we found only a heap of feathers left to remind us of the big goose that had been policing our vegetable garden.

And when he had the gall to invade our barnyard, knocking over a rabbit hutch or giving our hens such a fright that they stopped laying for a week, we broke out our shotguns and were actually delighted if a loud yelp told us that, at least, he had a few pellets under his hide to remind him that he was most unwelcome.

Though experience had taught us that we were making a futile gesture, we always set out steel traps after a coyote's visitation, baiting them carefully. Not once did we find a live coyote in a trap, though, on a few occasions a pathetic, bloody red-and-gray foot told us that the brave little prairie wolf, finding himself hopelessly gripped, had simply chewed his own foot off.

When, after an absence of 40 years, I returned to live in Aptos, most of the night sounds that I had known in my childhood had been stilled.

But one moonlight night not long ago, I went out on the back deck to watch a big barn owl that was sitting on Martin Rickard's tall TV aerial, filling the night air

with his loud "Hoos!" When he paused, I heard the scream of a fish hawk somewhere along Mangels Creek. Then, somewhere in Trout Gulch, I heard the long-drawn howl of a coyote with answering howls, like echoes, that came from every point of the compass. I knew then that the hardy little fellow had managed to survive all the changes in the countryside.

Further confirmation of his survival came in not too pleasant form only a month ago.

One neighbor after another had complained that his cat was missing. Since we are near busy Cathedral Drive, we all assumed that the cats had died under car wheels. Then Arne Jensen of Arne's TV Repair bought the property bordering Quail Run at Trout Gulch Road. He stayed late one evening, making some alterations on the house, and, when he came out, noticed something moving along Quail Run. He went to the fence and looked over, to see a coyote with the body of a cat dangling from its mouth.

The unfortunate feline bore the distinctive markings of Martin Rickard's missing pet. A coyote with a taste for cat's meat?

But, since then, every few days the late evening serenity has been broken by a scream of feline agony, and another neighbor reports his cat missing.

## Nov. 11—it remains Veterans Day to many

Despite the decree from Congress that Veterans Day was a three-day holiday celebrated on Oct. 22 this year, patriotic organizations in the county are planning a full day of activities on Sunday, Nov. 11 — the traditional date for Veterans Day.

More than 300 flags, donated by the families of deceased veterans, will be flying at county cemeteries as a project of the United Veterans Council.

In the mid-county area, the "Avenue of Flags" can be seen at the Odd Fellows Cemetery, the Duquel Cemetery, Holy Cross Cemetery and the Peace Cemetery.

A little further south, the Army is joining with the Naval Reserve to honor war dead in triple ceremonies at Freedom, Corralitos and Watsonville.

The Navy band from the Treasure Island Naval Station, an honor guard from Ft. Ord and Watsonville High School bugler Jeff Chambers will be participating in ceremonies starting at 10:30 a.m. at the Freedom VFW hall.

A short time later, they will move to Corralitos where a memorial wreath will be placed and then finally to V.F.W. hall in Watsonville.