

Wealthy families from San Francisco had summer estates here

(Second of two parts)

Lewis Hanchett's father bought additional land that included a block on the cliffside and two blocks near Railroad Avenue in Capitola.

By the time the Hanchett family had grown to six children, they owned about 16 acres — with space for raising chickens and ducks, and a barn, four garages, a hothouse for a vegetable garden, fruit trees, the tennis court and croquet lawn, plus an adequate play yard.

A house with a laundry was added near the gulch side of House One for the maids, and another unit was built for the family's Chinese cook.

Summer activity for the family often included visits with their San Francisco friends who also owned estates in Santa Cruz County.

Children of the Porter-Sesnon, the Tillman-Mangels, the C. C. Moores and the Pioda family were all about the same age as Alice and Lucy Hanchett. The Porter-Sesnon family maintained a mansion that now sits across Soquel Drive from Cabrillo College, while the Fred Tillman and Mangels family — who were neighbors of the Hanchetts in San Francisco — owned a part of the Mangels estate in Aptos.

In 1915, the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco created a minor depression for the tourist industry in Santa Cruz County. Charles C. Moore, president of that exposition and a prominent San Francisco engineer, also acquired an estate in Santa Cruz that year.

The Moore family purchased and redeveloped "Tres Ojos de Agua" — a tiny 176-acre rancho then located in the "Escalona Heights," area of Santa Cruz. Charles Moore rebuilt a large

residence and designed the surrounding grounds to include a nine-hole golf course and a private lake stocked with trout. A stream on the property emptied into Neary Lagoon, and the beach nearby became "Moore's Beach."

Paul Pioda was originally from Santa Cruz County and was well-acquainted with the Hihn family. He resided then in San Francisco but spent summer months with his family at Seabright.

Children from all of these families shared a number of interests — including golf and polo — that led to the use of the former Spreckels racetrack as a polo field in the mid-1920s, and the development of the Santa Cruz Golf Club a few years before. Mrs. Butler was later among the first golf enthusiasts to purchase a summer residence at Pasatiempo.

In the years between 1923 and 1929, the Hanchett family moved to Santa Barbara — where Lewis Edward Hanchett resided while he was involved with real estate transactions in Los Angeles. He and Harry of the Chandler of the Los Angeles Times arranged for the consolidation of rail lines by Southern Pacific into one central streetcar depot in downtown Los Angeles, the Union Depot, which was built on Hanchett property.

During this period, El Salto was summer home for Lucy Hanchett Butler and her husband, Vincent K. Butler Sr., who were married in 1924. Among Butler's tennis partners at El Salto was the late Harry Hooper Sr., who was named to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971.

Hooper had been star lead-off man for the Boston Red Sox, and was the captain of the team when he left after 12 years to join the Chicago White Sox in 1921. Hooper played with the White Sox

until 1925, and Mrs. Butler said she remembers one season he skipped summer training and held out for higher pay.

Vincent Butler began playing with Hooper on the El Salto tennis courts. "I can remember Vincent running Harry around on the court to keep him in shape," Mrs. Butler said.

Mrs. Butler can also remember years that Army maneuvers were held each summer right next to the El Salto property. The Army camps were on Hihn lands near the old air field, she said, and each year the Army would come and warn the Hanchetts to keep their windows open while the soldiers fired cannons off the cliffs toward moving targets towed by boats in the bay.

The camp usually lasted from three-to-six weeks, she said, and the family often sat on the cliffs along what is now Park Avenue to watch the target practice. The family dog, however, usually disappeared as soon as the cannons were fired, not to return until several weeks later.

In 1929, Mrs. Butler engaged in a small enterprise in Seacliff, when she and her friends discovered a group of state cabins on the beach could be rented for \$200 per year. She and her friends each acquired a cabin for their own use, and spent summers there during the early years of the depression.

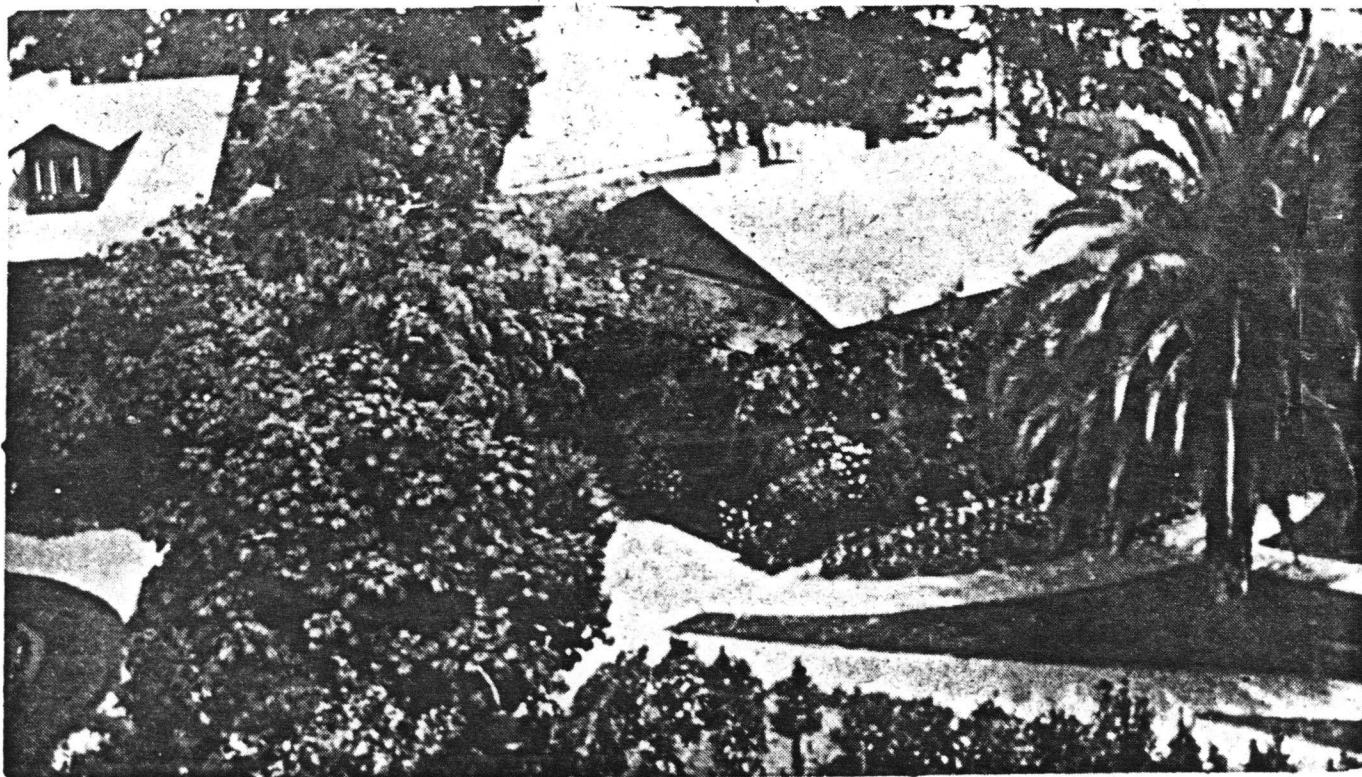
The Hanchetts continued to spend summers in Capitola through World War II, when it was used by Mrs. Butler's brother Lewis and his wife, Gwen. They recall hanging black curtains in all the windows of the cliffside homes to comply with wartime regulations that forbade lights along the coast.

In 1946, El Salto was sold to Joseph A. and Mary Tabacchini, who made further additions to the

resort and transformed some of the homes into smaller units to be used as rentals. The Victorian used by the Hanchett caretaker was torn down, and the color scheme of the resort was changed from green with red trim to "a ghastly white," Mrs. Butler said.

El Salto is presently owned by Elizabeth Blodgett, who favors a 10-units-per-acre-multiple-residential zoning (RMLM) designation for the resort property.

Story by Carolyn Swift



El Salto houses one and two, shot from the water tower.

REFERENCE



A favorite pastime of Lucy and Butler Hanchett was riding horseback through the hills.

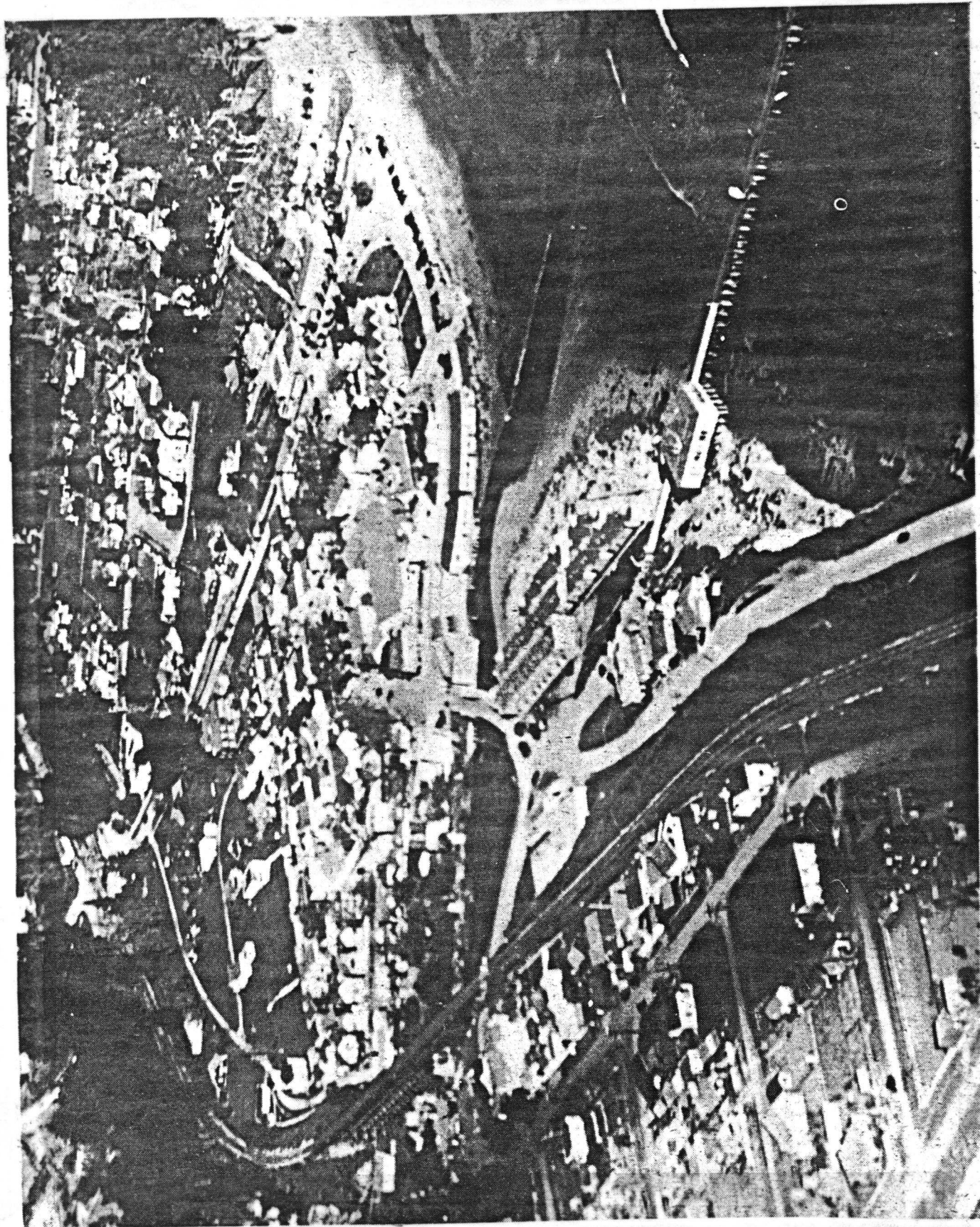


The Hanchett family on an early visit to El Salto. Standing rear, from left, Mary Corbet, Lewis E. Hanchett, Mrs. Burke Corbet, Miss Cook, house-

keeper and nurse. Second row, Alice Hanchett, Mrs. Lewis J. Hanchett, and Franches Corbet. Lucy Hanchett is seated with the family dog. Toodles.



A governess cart and a pony named Dolly were summer transportation for the Hanchett children.



A 1930s aerial view of Capitola showing Depot Hill and El Salto.