

# *La Selva Beach* ~~*Santa Cruz History*~~

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AN AUTHENTIC HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

OF LA SELVA BEACH

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SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

(FORMERLY KNOWN AS ROB ROY)

These facts and figures were obtained directly from Mr. David W. Batchelor, the original owner and developer, to give as gift mementos at the special Community Birthday Party honoring him upon his 85th birthday at the La Selva Beach Community Clubhouse on Saturday evening, July 20, 1957.

Quite a number of years ago--32 to be exact--Mr. David W. Batchelor, a well-known realtor from Petaluma (Sonoma County) with an already state-wide reputation for land development in the northern part of California, while on a return trip north from Monterey County traveling upon the old San Andreas Road, stopped off to view these acres of virgin land. Greatly attracted to the natural beauty of this spot with its forest, glen, and seashore, this Scotsman of foresight and long-range vision immediately saw the possibilities of creating a seaside town.

Mr. Batchelor purchased the entire tract of land, 265 acres including three-quarters of a mile of beach, directly from the Jesuit Fathers for the sum of \$50,000 cash in 1925. The property, a Retreat of the Jesuit Fathers, was known as Manresa, and was a part of the old Spanish Grant, San Andressa. Being a Scotsman, Mr. Batchelor quite naturally chose a Scottish name for his new town--naming it Rob Roy after a famous highland Scottish chief--and gave all the streets and roads Scotch names.

With an eye to the future, this practical landman personally drew up plans for his new town, Rob Roy. During the next few years, Mr. Batchelor spent over \$250,000 (a quarter of a million) in completely laying out the tract: sub-dividing, building roads, putting in a water system, installing a sewage system, having electricity brought in; building homes, erecting a modern shopping center--a large attractive two-story stucco building which stood on the present site of the La Selva Beach Clubhouse, and which had furnished apartments upstairs and on the ground floor a restaurant, grocery store, office, and a large garage. The garage was later converted into a recreation hall and ballroom where weekly dances and private parties were held with attending crowds.

The property was landscaped--a variety of trees and shrubbery were planted. \$900 was spent on the shrubbery entering La Playa Boulevard--formerly Batchelor Avenue.

The beach area was open to the public as was the camp in the grove of trees and both were equipped with modern facilities--including a beach store and parking area. Sites were set aside for a church and playground.

Rob Roy soon became known as a favorite vacation spot. Many vacationers came from far and near. On a Sunday as many as 500 people could be seen on the beach.

In 1935, some of the property changed hands and the original Rob Roy with its Scottish-named streets and roads was changed to La Selva Beach--The Forest Beach.

Since the early days when the Jesuit Fathers strolled meditatively beneath the gorgeous trees and along the seashore, this natural beauty spot has grown into an outstanding community until today Mr. Batchelor can recognize with real pride and happiness the fulfillment of his own original dream.

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