


A History Of Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Story and Photos
by Park Staff

Just after the turn of this century, Andrew P. Hill, an established artist from San Jose, received a commission to photograph the redwoods. Hill decided to use the Fremont Big Tree Grove, now known as Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, to do his photography. Upon arrival at the Big Trees, he was informed that in order to take his pictures he would have to pay a fee. He became angry and left. At first, Hill pushed for Big Trees to become a park. However, after the urging of a friend he at last settled on Big Basin for his park site. A rallying cry, *Save the Redwoods!* caught on in both San Jose and Santa Cruz. Hill organized an expedition to look over the Big Basin area. As the party walked through the areas, they came across a great, hollow monarch, towering over three hundred feet. "As we emerged into the opening before this tree," reads Hill's account, "I noticed the members of our party all looking at this giant with open mouths, and suddenly I became aware of being in the same condition." As an expression of their enthusi-



pare that way of suggestive selling to the normal dessert-for-anyone? line we usually get as the waitress is hurridly carrying away our dirty dishes.

This particular Mr. Steak owner did a fantastic job of training and motivating his crew to do more than just serve a steak and potato dinner. With suggestive selling his customers enjoyed a shrimp cocktail, corn-on-the-cob, mushroom steak sauce and banana cream pie along with that steak and potato. No wonder he increased his ACT by more than 30 percent. Using the same techniques you can too!

Next issue we will cover Point-of-Purchase Advertising. ●



Big Basin Redwood's administration building in 1938.

asm, it was proposed to perpetuate the exploring party by making it into an organization to fight the battle of saving the redwoods. On the evening of May 18, 1900, on the west bank of the Sempervirens Creek opposite Slippery Rock, the **Sempervirens Club** was organized and the grand sum of \$32 was collected in a hat for the treasury.

A bill was drafted and presented to the State Legislature in 1901 to provide for the necessary funds to purchase the park. There was much controversy and many complications over the bill, but at last it was passed and the park was established in September, 1902 — the first State Park. Thirty-five hundred acres were sold to the State for \$250 thousand and as a gesture

Andrew P. Hill painting the auto tree in Big Basin. A search for the painting is being conducted by the State Parks Dept.



First Quarter 1985

of good will, the H. L. Middleton Company threw in three hundred acres of logged over land to bring the total park to 38 hundred acres. The State Legislature in 1903 set aside the sum of \$10 thousand to finance the Park for the next two years.

In 1904, the Park was open to campers for the first time. However, in September of 1904, the dream of a park full of people was clouded by disaster. In some slash land on the California Timber Company's

FAST STATS

Flow Charts & Flip Charts
Exhibits & Slide Shows
The finest quality with
the fastest turnaround.

While U Wait Stat Service
for pickup & delivery
(408) 727-0175

Central Camera Inc.
964 Parker Ct. Santa Clara, CA

land at Waterman Gap, a fire sprang up. Warden Pilkington, the Park's first warden and his heroic volunteers worked day and night, but all seemed lost. After 10 days of exhausting effort, all except the area immediately around park headquarters had been burned over. Sad scenes were described around the Trail Beautiful area. The redwoods in that area were replaced by black shafts. It was in this fire that a tree, the chimney tree, burned for 14 months. It can still be seen on Sky-meadow Road between Huckleberry

The
Seafood Bar
at the Crow's Nest is Fast
&
Fresh
for
Lunch

Lunch

Served 11am-4pm daily

STUFFED FRESH CROISSANT

Served with your choice of either seafood salad or chicken with water-cress salad. 3.50

STUFFED FRESH PAPAYA 3.50
Served with your choice of either seafood salad or chicken with water-cress salad.

FISH AND CHIPS 3.50
Pieces of golden white fish and fries.

HEARTY FRENCH DIP SANDWICH 4.95

A mound of roasted beef served au jus with either green salad or fries. Served with Horseradish sauce.

THE BROSE

Our French Dip on a fresh croissant. 5.50

CALAMARI 5.25

A one-half pound of golden calamari and your choice of green salad or fries.

Plus tempting appetizers like oysters on the half-shell, steamed clams, spicy nachos, potato skins and stuffed artichokes.

THE CROW'S NEST

LOTS OF PARKING □ NO WAITING

AT THE SANTA CRUZ YACHT HARBOR □ 476-4560

BANK D TRUST

TH - RELIABILITY - SERVICE
SINCE 1870

LOCALLY-BASED AND FULLY-
STAFFED TRUST DIVISION —

Retirement Planning —
Pensions, Profit Sharing,
Keogh, IRA Investment and
Estate Administration
Custody, Conservator, and
Guardian Services
Testamentary and
Living Trusts

EQUIPMENT LEASING

(408) 458-6339 - Santa Cruz
onterey call (408) 688-8171

UZ • WEST SANTA CRUZ • FRONT-RIVER • HARBOR
SCOTTS VALLEY • SCOTTS VALLEY JUNCTION
IVILLE • WATSONVILLE SQUARE • FREEDOM
orporation • Member Federal Reserve System

Campground and the Sky Meadow
Campgrounds.

The Park's worst days were not over yet. An era of graft fell over the Park in 1907. Governor Pardee signed a bill abolishing the Redwood Park Commission, and in its place set up a State Board of Forestry. Sam Rambo was appointed Park Warden by the State Forester Lull, who was his friend. Suddenly rumors broke out. State Forester Lull entered into a secret agreement with a contractor to remove some trees killed by the fire of 1904 in the Sempervirens Falls area. No specific trees were designated and the contractor began to fell all trees, whether dead or not, and to split them into redwood posts and shakes. At last, in 1910, Hiram Johnson became governor and one of his first orders was for a complete investigation. So much public feeling was involved that the Park Commission was reinstated and all of the people involved in the scandal were dismissed.

The Park entered the 1920's in much the same fashion as the rest of the country. Fortunately, much was salvaged from those frivolous years. In 1926 the State began an interpretive program, and in 1927 the California Legislature provided

for the establishment of the State Park system. Andrew Hill died in 1922, but he shall never be forgotten. He saved the Big Basin Redwoods.

During the depression years, throughout the 1930's, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was formed by President Franklin Roosevelt to aid the unemployed with meaningful work. One CCC camp was headquartered in Big Basin and worked there. The CCC blacksmith shop is still standing, but many of the duties those men performed in the Park cannot be measured in buildings built. Let it suffice to say that they performed the duties that the State could not afford to perform itself.

By the 1940's and 50's the Park was well established. Many distinguished guests and personages have frequented Big Basin over the years. Visitors such as Bret Harte, Robert Louis Stevenson, Edwin Markham, Arnold Toynbee, John Muir, Rudyard Kipling and Nobel Laureate Ernest Lawrence have come through the Basin.

In the 1960's, the Sierra Club and the Save-the-Redwoods League inspired and motivated more land acquisitions. The most important was land along Berry Creek and West Waddell Creek, an area which was under the threat of being logged.

In 1968 the scene shifted to Mount McAbee, the geographic center of the Basin. Private owners had offered eight lots to the State but the latter was financially unable to meet their terms. By now the old Sempervirens Club had become virtually inactive, so a new group, realizing the urgency for action, formed along the lines of the Club and called themselves the Sempervirens Fund. Led once again by an eminent photographer, Howard King and by conservationist Claude A. Look, a campaign was begun to raise money which would enable the State to complete the purchase. By April, 1968 this had been accomplished, over \$26 thousand having been collected. To date, the Sempervirens Fund has added approximately three thousand acres to Big Basin bringing the total acreage to 16,329 acres.

The year 1984 marked Big Basin's eighty-second anniversary as the first state park. With the cooperation of the surrounding community, the State Park system, the Sempervirens Fund and other concerned conservationist groups, the Basin will continue to preserve and protect forever the magnificent groves of redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains.