

Cleaning up the river in the name of history

A few weeks before San Francisco Bay was discovered in 1768 by the Portola expedition, the Pajaro River was discovered and named.

Portola and his party of Catholic fathers, army personnel, Indian converts and scouts came upon the river on Oct. 8 of that year.

According to "Watsonville Yesterday" by Betty Lewis: "They soon came upon a river where they found a bird which Indians had killed and stuffed with straw and the Indians in the party dubbed the stream *Rio del Pajaro* — the fathers had named it *Santa Ana*, but the name *Pajaro* was to remain."

More than 200 years later and as a finale to the Pajaro Valley History Week, the Pajaro Valley Historical Assn. and the Watsonville Muskrats will join forces Tuesday to clean up the historical entrance to the Pajaro Valley.

Diane Porter Cooley of the historical association laughingly described the event as "a totally unorganized and unpremeditated event rising out of the enthusiasm of the populace for their history, rising like a tide up the Pajaro River."

She explained that the Muskrats have already "out of their own good spirits and good will" worked on cleaning up River Park and the area where the Pajaro River crosses Main Street.

"We thought if they, of all unlikely sources, could be the people actually exhibiting the kind of voluntary, self-help action that Watson-

ville needs, we could certainly be out there helping them. Our efforts have been to get ordinances passed and buildings saved," Cooley said. "It's not only workshops but work that we want to encourage people in Watsonville to participate in."

Cooley said everyone is invited to join the two groups

(Mayor Ann Soldo will also be pitching in) Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m. for about an hour of work at Main Street and the bridge. Cooley said she will supply plastic garbage bags and apples to anyone who participates. But it would help, she added, if the volunteers would bring plastic bags of their own.



The words 'Rest and Think It Over' are carved in the stone bench that marks the historic Pajaro River bridge.