

5/6/62

Progress Comes As Twin Lakes Ponders Happy Past

Watching The Train Roll By Was Fun



The old railroad trestle at Wood's lagoon was new when this unidentified woman sat on

a log to watch the train chug across many years ago. Today the access road to be constructed to the small craft harbor

will be built along here. Eaton street is off to the far right and the site of the Stokeley cannery is in the left background, not

visible in the picture. (The photograph is from the collection of Roy Boekenooen.)

Progress Coming Toward Woods Lagoon



Lake-side superintendents watch as monster bulldozers cross and criss-cross the drained bed of Wood's lagoon in Twin Lakes. To be converted to a 320-boat small craft harbor, construction of jettys will commence soon for the \$3.7 million project.

SOQUEL YOUTH GROUP PLANS CAR WASHING Women's Reserve

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By Margaret Koch
The lake came to life slowly in the early morning light.

In the shallows a lone white crane balanced on one leg and probed the mud for frogs. Tadpoles quivered like jelly in their escape.

A mud-hen coasted idly along the edge, leaving a V-shaped flat ripple. A mallard and a hen duck circle warily, wings whistling, then crash-landed with a splash.

But part of the lake-life was just going to bed: back in the tree-lined gully behind the lake a family of raccoons settled down to drowse through the daylight hours. An opossum slumbered nearby.

And the humans in the houses around the lake area were stirring. The smell of coffee breathed out in the early morning air; a radio blared; a window slammed.

Twin Lakes—those two words have conjured up a kind of magic for everyone who has ever been there. From curiosity seekers to bird watchers, to guests at those parties and the residents themselves, all have fallen under the spell.

On one side the great salt waves eat steadily at the white sand beach. Just a few yards away the two lagoons—Wood's and Schwann—have simmered for years with a quiet life of their own. The mud-hens still scutter over Schwann lagoon. But at Wood's, a pack of 20th century monster machines are on the prowl in the drained lake bed.

Before too long anchors will splash into the water instead of mallards and there will be no secluded mud flats for the white crane. The lagoon will be a small craft harbor, with docks and breakwaters. This is progress—for which our legislators have fought long and well.

But progress hurts people too, sometimes. For months there has been a sword hanging over the heads of west-shore home-owners. Would "they come through here?"

Go over there? Or was there an alternate route the access road could take without gobbling up previous homes?

Residents saw surveyors wade the lake, tramp through house yards and measure practically everything. A home owner might go shopping and return several hours later to find that in his absence his garden had sprouted a set of marker stakes complete with orange cloth flags. What did it mean? It was frightening. Roof repairs were postponed; paint jobs were delayed and people waited unhappily for the decision.

"We have to have progress—I can't say I don't want it but you never think you will be the one to get hurt," remarked one long-time home owner.

Another who retired from national fame to the unique charm of a lake-side home said sadly, "I hoped I wouldn't have to see this happen in my lifetime."

"This is one of our county's most beautiful spots—we should at least try to preserve the natural beauty," said another.

To them Twin Lakes isn't just a beautiful spot—it's almost a state of mind.

How did this place called Twin Lakes come into being in the first place? The longest, sharpest memory in the area belongs to Louis C. Scholl, whose family settled there in 1856. His great-uncle was Jacob Schwann, for whom the second lagoon was named.

"Twin Lakes was really started by the Baptists," explained Scholl.

Back in the 1880's members of the Northern Baptist conference saw it—liked it and came to camp there, arriving in wagons and buggies. Eventually lots were bought and houses were built; the old Baptist church—brown shingled

with a circular belfry—was completed in 1890. The Twin Lake hotel was built and the area bustled with activity all summer.

"In what is still known as East Twin Lakes the buyer of each lot had a right to swim, bathe, boat and fish in Schwann lagoon," Scholl recalled.

And although horses were travel-power in those days they were not allowed in Twin Lakes proper. Instead a large corral and barn were maintained on the beach at the foot of the lagoon.

A cement swimming pool—a novelty for sure—was built at the foot of Seventh avenue by a family named Whitmore, according to Scholl.

The old hotel burned in the 20's; the original church was torn down in 1946 to make way for the present-day modern plant. The old pool walls—long empty of water but full of cracks and spiders—still stand beneath the Eucalyptus trees.

"My father said he had counted up to 35 sailing ships in Monterey bay at one time," Scholl reminisced.

The family owned 160 acres which was planted first to wheat and later to barley. Part of the original family ranch is now owned by the state, and includes Schwann lagoon. This will be a state park some day.

Where earth fill exists today between each lagoon and the bay beaches, they used to be a wooden bridge. Scholl recalls that the Wood's lagoon bridge was being torn out the day Pearl Harbor was bombed. The Schwann bridge had been replaced with fill about 10 years before that.

As a boy, Scholl clammed, fished and hunted, right in the Twin Lakes area. He still lives on Scholl lane (private property), in a family home that overlooks Schwann lagoon and is filled with family treasures.

"I grew up in a wonderful age—I wouldn't trade with today's youngsters," he commented. Then his memory skipped back over the years briefly. "You should have seen the ducks on those lagoons years ago—there were hundreds of them," he added with a sparkle in his eye.

It was that same old Twin Lakes sparkle.

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