

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOY WOODS

In tracing the ownership of this property now known as Joy Woods and in order to give a proper background to the story it is necessary to go back to the time when it was first claimed by the white man 409 years ago. It forms an interesting tale and could easily be developed into a volume, but I will only give you the highlights.

Juan Francisco Cabrillo, a Portuguese navigator in the employ of the king of Spain, touched upper California shores in the year 1542. He named Cape Mendocino in honor of Signior Antonio de Mendoza, who, as Viceroy of the Spanish province of Mexico, sponsored the expedition. He turned south for the winter and spent it on the Island of San Miguel off the southern coast of California and, while exploring it, suffered a broken arm which eventually caused his death.

Before that occurred he instructed his second in command, Lieutenant Ferrellio, to carry on the exploration as far north as possible, and the latter reached a point on the Oregon coast that is now marked by a monument which was erected a few years ago. On this expedition Spain based her claim to this territory, Joy Woods included.

Thirty six years passed before the next act in the California drama came on stage. Before that, rumors had reached Europe that there was something cooking in the Pacific. England had begun to flex her muscles as a maritime nation and her ambitious young queen, Elizabeth, was anxious to get a slice of the cake that was being cut up so rapidly by the Spanish monarch who, at that period already governed the richest and most powerful nation in the world.

As a result, an English expedition was fitted out and dispatched, under the command of Admiral Francis Drake, to add some of this new world to the crown of England. Up to the time that Drake passed through the straits of Magellan and entered the Western Pacific, Spain, had been in undisputed possession of all the land touched by its waters. At every point he contacted he found a "no vacancy" sign posted. But he also found no locks on the doors nor any adequate guards over the property.

Determined not to return home empty-handed and in spite of the fact that the two countries were nominally at peace, he changed his role of friendly explorer into that of a benign pirate. True, he did not kill anyone in his new character. He did not have to. Resistance would have been useless against his overpowering force. So he proceeded merrily on his way, sacking defenseless towns on the coast of Chili and Peru, stripping and sinking unarmed ships, after sending their crews ashore, and carefully stowing away their valuables.

Of course he knew that when this became known to the central Spanish authorities there would be trouble and if he returned on the course he was following they would be in wait for him; so he decided to return to England by a different route. Meanwhile, his starting fleet of 5 vessels had, for one cause or another, been reduced to a single ship and, in order to refit and replenish it, he landed at what is now called Drake's Bay on the Marin coast. There he tarried for some six weeks while the work was being done, but in the meantime

He was not idle. He made friends with the Indian natives who marvelled in awe at the white men who carried thunder and lightning in their hands, and at their great ships. At last he found a goodly land with no Spaniards around; so he seized the opportunity, while the Indian owners were still in a daze, to put over the slickest real estate deal in history. With a few trinkets added he induced the simple creatures to acknowledge the sovereignty of Queen Bess and claimed their land for England, including Joy Woods.

To confirm the sale he had a record made on a brass plate and fastened it to a post. We can be sure that this part of the story was true, as the plate was found a few years ago and is I understand, at the University of California in Berkeley now.

Evidently Drake did not know or did not care about the previous claims of the Spanish. In any case, he left it to his government to argue the case if it ever came to trial. Then, refitted and refreshed, he reloaded his loot and stores and, without mishap, returned to England by the Cape of Good Hope. Thus his was the first English vessel to circumnavigate the earth. There was great rejoicing in London when he unloaded his \$2,000,000 cargo and presented it to his Queen.

Strangely enough, in spite of all this, no real controversy ever arose over Spain's claim to California, though for the next 200 years she made no attempt to colonize it. In the meantime, the other ambitious nations, and England also, had taken other new lands from their native owners elsewhere on the globe and were very busy consolidating their gains. For a long time there was respect for each others' discoveries. You might call it a sort of "honor among thieves" attitude. But about 1770 some of them again went on the prowl and California was tempting meat. Warnings of impending trouble caused Spain to turn her attentions northward. She too had been busy with her southern colonies and had injected her brand of civilization into various vital parts of South and Central America and especially Mexico.

Finally, in 1768, a mixed expedition of soldiers, civilians and missionaries started north from Lower California and established the first settlement and mission at San Diego. Others followed until, in the next 44 years, there was a chain of each reaching north along the coast as far as Sonoma.

During this process Spain had lost by revolts all her American and Mexican territory. This involved California, and Mexican governor took over the head of government here. Joy Woods again changed masters.

But while the Spanish were still in possession, there was one nation that did not respect her claim on California. In view of world affairs thday you can easily guess which one--Russia.

The Muscovites had founded a colony in Alaska and it was not doing so well. A steady diet of fish and seal meat was not to their liking and there was great difficulty and expense attached to getting shipments from home, which at times caused great hardships. They were primarily in the fur-hunting business and when their expeditions for sea otter, beaver and seals along these coasts disclosed the fact that here lay rich farming lands practically unguarded, a careful investigation was made, with the result that in 1811 a strong force of Russian mechanics and Aleutian hunters, under the command of Alexander

Kuskoff, was landed at Bodega Bay fully equipped to found and maintain a colony. Once more Joy Woods had a new claimant.

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They established a depot at Bodega Bay/a settlement and farm inland called Kuskoff near the present site of Bodega. They also farmed around Bodega Bay, and their hunters stripped the streams and coast of furbearing animals. The following year they founded what is now known as Fort Ross, and it became their principal settlement. Everything that they gathered above their needs from soil or sea was shipped to Alaska, and no threat or order from either the Spanish or Mexican governors sufficed to make them leave.

Under the latter, however, the pressure on the Russians increased. In 1835 the office of Commandante of the Northern Frontier was created and General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo placed in charge. He was young, ambitious and resourceful and immediately went to work. The town of Sonoma was laid out, a presidio built and a small body of troops assembled. As he did not have sufficient force to attack the Russians, to whom he was now a near neighbor, he again warned them to vacate. They did not move but continued their favorite sport of negotiating. So Vallejo tried another plan.

Some 5 years before, a Yankee Captain, John P. Cooper, had arrived in California on a trading venture. He became enamoured with the country and also with a black-eyed senorita who was a sister-in-law of General Vallejo and a member of the Carrillo family. He forsook the sea, took out Mexican citizenship papers, obtained the El Molina land grant of 17,892.42 acres and married the gal. He soon became a trusted friend of Vallejo, and the young general often turned to him for advice.

So, when the latter determined to try his new plan, he enlisted Cooper's counsel. This plan was the erection of a miniature iron curtain across the edge of the territory occupied by the Russians to prevent their further expansion to the south. To carry it out successfully he needed men of more combative dispositions than that shown by the native Californians, and, on Cooper's recommendation, he selected three of the members of Cooper's former ship's crew. They were James Black, James Dawson and Donald Manuel McIntosh. Shortly thereafter McIntosh was granted 8,849.13 acres of land whose western boundary ran within a gun shot of the Russian settlement at Bodega. This was called The Rancho Estero Americano, and in the northwestern corner of it lies this timber land that is now known as Joy Woods, which now, for the first time, passed into private hands. The other two men also received grants later but, for the time being, they worked together in whip sawing lumber and in erecting buildings near the present town of Freestone as a base of operation. They were the first Caucasians to settle in Sonoma County.

The expected friction with the Russians did develop. Although no actual fighting occurred, Vallejo's men never failed to call the Russian bluffs, and eventually made things so unpleasant for the Muscovites that they abandoned their squatter holdings at Kuskoff and withdrew to Ross. Here is an incident that some of our present day statesmen would do well to bear in mind.

McIntosh operated his rancho for about 5 years. He then decided to sell his holdings and join his old shipmate, Black, who

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had acquired the Nicasio Rancho in the meantime. He made a deal with Jasper O'Farrell for the property. O'Farrell was a young Irish engineer who had been engaged in surveying land for the Mexican Government and private parties in California. He it was who conceived and carried out, against the stiff opposition of the property owners, the demarcation of Market Street in San Francisco. O'Farrell St. was named after him.

According to the terms of the sale, McIntosh was to receive \$800 a year for life for the property. Disagreement arose about this deal and the case was taken to court. A final settlement was made on a cash basis and O'Farrell paid him \$5,000 for the Rancho, including some 1500 head of cattle and 150 head of horses that he had accumulated while operating it. This amounted to about 60 cents per acre, and included Joy Woods. O'Farrell and taken a lot of his surveying fees in land and, due to the influx of immigrants, it had begun to increase in value. He concluded to sell some of his holdings for cash. He disposed of some of the rancho to individual settlers, but the bulk of it was bought by a San Francisco banker, Benjamin Belloc, for speculative purposes. Belloc, the next owner of Joy Woods, had the timber land plotted into 51 tracts, each of which contained approximately 20 acres. Several of these were sold to ranchers who needed wood and fencing material to enclose the land they had bought, which, until then, had been open range. They bought lumber for their buildings from a mill that been erected on the property in 1855 by three Thurston brothers, who, under an agreement with O'Farrell, operated on a stumpage basis. The transfer to Belloc was effected in 1864.

Shortly before this transfer a young Englishman who, with his wife, had settled at Bodega Bay in the early 50's, bought the Thurston mill and took over its operation. On May 2, 1865 he bought the 4 tracts of land that surrounded the mill, a matter of 89.25 acres. His name was Benjamin Joy and his wife's was Elizabeth. On October 11, 1871 he purchased an additional 37 tracts containing 740 acres, all of these tracts being obtained from Belloc at a cost of \$5,340.25.

Thereafter, as opportunity offered, Joy re-purchased two tracts that had been sold by Belloc; #37 from John McGree in 1868 and #39 from James W. Watson in 1871 at a cost of \$600 and \$1000 respectively. Seven others of the Belloc tracts were in other hands when Joy was called to England on business matters in 1876. He became ill there and died shortly afterwards.

Those 7 tracts were owned as follows: #1, #2 and #3 by R. W. Acker, #43 and #44 by Jas W. Clark, #12 by James Waddell and #36 by Patrick Quinlan. In 1877 Waddell sold tract #12 to Samuel McCready. At McCready's death his son Thomas came into possession and later sold this tract together with 137 acres of adjoining brush and pasture land to the Joy family. In 1875 R. W. Acker sold his three lots to E. H. Cheney who, in 1880, sold them to James Billett and the Billett heirs sold them to the present owner Angelo Pozzi. Tracts 43 and 44 were bought by Patrick Carroll from the Clark heirs in 1904. On Carroll's death in 1919 the property passed to his children and in 1923 they sold it to Frank Silva, the present owner. The ownership of #36 still remains in the Quinlan family. The Joy heirs continued milling operations on the original site until the late 1880's. During this period much of the timber on the eastern edge of the property was cut and some of land was disposed of. In 1884 Chas. Collins bought tracts 47, 49, 50 and 51 and portions of 45 and 46. After

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Jollin's death his widow sold this acreage in 1936 to Frank Silva to whom the Joys had in 1922 already sold portions of lots 45 and 46. In 1903 Rudolph Feige purchased lots 41 and 42 and this property is now owned by his daughter and son-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Bert Elliot. The only other sale was made to William Kingwell. It was tract #22 and lies on the northern edge next to the Pozzi property. Kingwell sold to the present owner John Gonnella.

So having followed the shifting titles of this noted acreage in and out of the Joy ownership throughout the past century it now appears that its present status is fixed for the foreseeable future. Its certification as a tree farm by the Lumbermen's Redwood Association begins a new era in its ancient and honorable existence. By this act generations yet unborn may be assured that they too will be privileged to come here and marvel at its beauty, enjoy its inspiration and, out of its perpetual store, continue to receive the practical assistance which enabled our forbears to convert a wilderness into productive, civilized communities.

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Now a few lines about the Joy family and their descendants:

As Benjamin Joy had left America before I was born, I have no personal knowledge of him. However, the evidence shows that he must have been an excellent businessman. He and his wife, Elizabeth, whose maiden name was Machell, were born in England, he in Leeds on Jan. 4, 1821 and she in Brentford, May 28, 1824. They arrived in America about 1845 and lived for a short time in Wisconsin, but not long there after they became infected with the California fever that was sweeping the country, sold their holdings in Wisconsin and came to this state in the early 50's.

Their first home here was at Bodega Bay, which was at that time a lively shipping point. The record shows that in 1857 Joy bought a house and lot there from Donald McDonald, and it was there that the son, Thomas Benjamin was born in 1856, and the elder daughter, Ann Maria, in 1860.

In 1864 he bought the Thurston Bros. mill and moved to the redwood tract on which it was located. This mill operated an "up and down" saw and had a capacity of 3000 ft. per day. The following year he bought the 4 tracts of land adjacent to it and thus began to accumulate the timbered property that now is known as Joy Woods. It was here that his third and last child, Minerva, was born, in 1864.

For the next 12 years Joy operated the Thurston mill, until in 1876 he went on the journey to England that ended in his death. At that time young Thomas Benjamin was 18, Annie 16 and Minnie 12 years of age, and on the widowed mother now devolved the management of the property in addition to the care and training of her young and growing family.

She, in true pioneer fashion, rose to meet the crisis in their affairs. Fortunately she was a woman of sound judgment and possessed of executive ability, and both responsibilities were discharged with marked success.

In order to increase the mill's output she acted on the advice of her brother-in-law, James Swan, and sent to England for a circular saw which was installed under his direction. Mr. Swan, grandfather of Mrs. William Kingwell of Sebastopol, was a steam engineer who came to this country from England in 1855. By this move the mill's capacity was increased to 12,000 ft.

After the most accessible timber on the eastern side of the property had been cut, the family decided to move to a new location, but before this was done the mother and her two daughters made a trip to England, where they visited with relatives and friends for several months. The son, Benjamin, now a vigorous young man of 26, remained at home in charge of the property.

After the family returned, a new site was selected on the western edge of the tract on Tannery Creek, where the contour of the land made easier logging operations possible, and in 1885 a new home, mill building, cabins for the help, barn, shop, and other buildings were erected, roads built, new machinery installed and milling operations started the following year with a capacity of 20,000 ft. per day. Long before this young Ben had become a competent woodsman and mill operator, and for the next 40 years, through good times and bad, successfully conducted the business. In this he was ably assisted by the rest of the family under the watchful eyes of the mother until her death in 1912 at the age of 88.

From that time on, Ben, Annie and their uncle, James Swan, who came to live with them after the death of his wife, formed a sort of triumvirate in the operation of the business, and a very successful one it was.

In the meantime, the younger sister, Minnie, had fitted herself for the teaching profession, obtained a certificate and found employment in various schools in the country. I had the honor and privilege of being one of her pupils. In 1893 she married Alfred Laton and changed her vocation. He was a member of a pioneer family and for most of his active life was engaged in the lumber business in various capacities, much of that time being spent in the employ of the Joy family. He learned it in many of its phases, as a faller, a woods boss, a mill operator and a lumber dealer.

He was in the employ of the Duncan Land and Lumber Co. when their first child was born, hence her name, Anita Duncan Laton.

Later he conducted a lumber yard in Sebastopol and for some time he served as mayor of the city. It was there that their two sons were born, Joy who is now a mill operator himself at Cazadero, and Burle, who has been an engineer in the employ of the Central Valley Project for several years. Burle has a son and daughter and they represent the fourth generation.

Annie Joy never married, nor did her brother Ben. All their active lives they worked together, and until death they were practically inseparable. A remarkable thing about this family is that each of the three children lived to the age of 80. Thus they passed out of this life in the same order in which they entered it. To my mind they were all exceptional people. From the mother's teaching and example they acquired the virtues of morality, industry, and sterling integrity, and the results were reflected in their own lives.

Today the management of this property is once more in the hands of a woman, one whose success in the teaching profession I have followed for many years with deep interest. Now that the mantle of responsibility for the administration of it, once worn by her forbearers, has fallen on her shoulders, let us hope that she may wear it as long and successfully as did her pioneer grand parent.

Howard C. McCaughey

Sept. 1951

(Given at the dedication of Jry Woods as
a Tree Farm.)