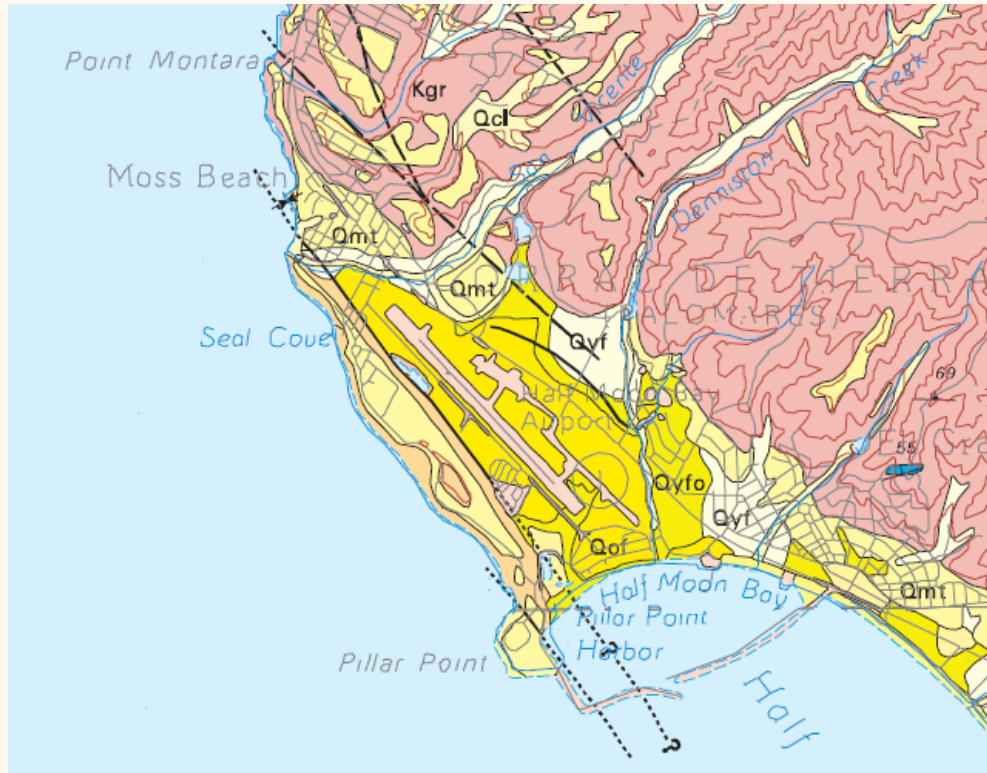


Granada

A Synonym for Paradise

The title is from Barbara VanderWerf's wonderful book about El Granada, which provided much of the information for this presentation.



In the Beginning - This story begins a very long time ago, about 100 million years. The oldest rock in this area, the Montara Mountain granite, was formed near the Mojave area in southern California, and carried north along a series of parallel faults. The infamous San Andreas fault extends along the Crystal Springs reservoir, while the San Gregorio/Seal Cove fault passes offshore and then through Pillar Point marsh.

The Montara Mountain Granite originally cooled from a magma chamber, and is made up of quartz and feldspar, with some metallic minerals. The quartz in this rock supplies the material for the area's white sand beaches. Because it is very solid and homogeneous, it does not shake as much as rocks with layers or sediments and provides a relatively strong base for homes in earthquakes.

While the coast was moving northward, ocean levels were rising and falling, depositing marine sediments on top of the granitic rocks. These are shales, mudstones, conglomerates, and sandstones, some with many marine fossils – bones of marine mammals, shells, and more.

The visible deposits on are relatively recent and were left by those moving shorelines. Covering the surface are alluvial fan deposits thousands of years old, including loams with high water-holding capacities that cause surface cracks during extended dry periods.

These flat sediment-covered terraces are excellent for farming.





Humans Arrive on the Scene - People most likely came to California at least 12,000 years ago (there is older evidence but it is much disputed). The ancient shoreline was then miles farther west so evidence of longer habitation is mostly lost. Archaeological evidence indicates ancestral Ohlone arrived in the San Francisco Bay region—depending on location—somewhere around 1500 years ago, displacing earlier populations. The El Granada area was occupied by Indians for many centuries prior to the European arrival. They lived generally along perennial and seasonal streams and along the ocean coast.

Thanks to Matthew Clark, retired archaeologist, who provided information for the history of the Burnham Strip.

The best current evidence indicates that this area was held by the Chiguan tribelet, who had several villages in the area. One was located at Pilarcitos Creek, another near Pillar Point, and a third was probably in Montara. Inhabitants of the area undoubtedly traveled along the coast for hunting, fishing, trading, or just to enjoy the view of what is now called Pillar Point.

Like other native Californians, the Ohlones managed their environment to improve it for their use. They burned grass and brush lands annually to improve forage for deer and rabbits, keep the land open and safer from predators and their neighbors, and improve productivity of the many resources they used. The Indians adapted to and managed their abundant local environment so well that some places were continuously occupied for literally thousands of years.

In 1912, Frank Brophy, who owned the Princeton-by-the-Sea tract, drained Pillar Point marsh to build a marina. He found a large midden of shells, and many evidences of human occupation. He gave up that project and the marsh returned.



From *Encounters with the Portolá Expedition* by NPS for GGNRA



Later European arrivals labeled these people "Costanoans," from the Spanish "costanos" or coast-dwellers. The Native Americans who controlled the San Francisco and Monterey Bay regions (including the MidCoast) at the 1769 Spanish invasion are now most commonly called "Ohlone," a name derived from a coastal village between Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay. Some Indian descendants still prefer "Costanoan," while others prefer Ohlone or identify with more specific tribelet names, such as Chiguan.

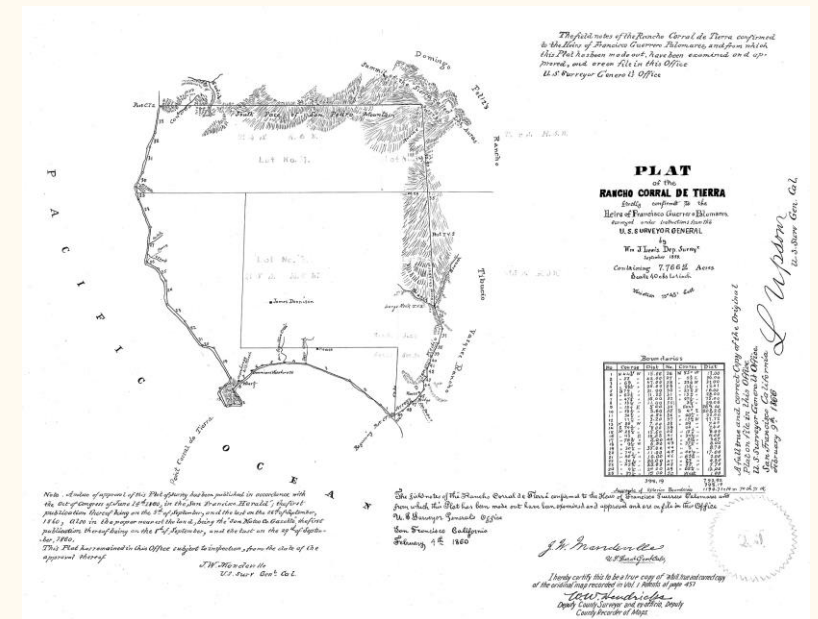
The Association of Ramaytush Ohlone (ARO) represents the interests of the original peoples of the San Francisco Peninsula. The purposes of the ARO align with "our ancestral responsibilities to care for the earth and to care for the people who reside in our ancestral homeland."

The arrival of Europeans – The Spanish Portola expedition marched through this area on October 30th, 1769. The diaries of Father Juan Crespi noted, “About nine o’clock in the morning we set out ... along the shore, carrying firewood from the creek here [Pilarcitos Creek], where there is a little, as the scouts reported they had seen no wood where they explored. Close to the shore ran tablelands and flat-lying hills of very good soil and grass, though the latter all burnt, for the natives burn off everything in order for a better yield in the grass-seeds they eat. On going about a league, we came to the point [Pillar Point] ... which makes a good [bay] here. It would be a fine place for a town, but there is not a stick of wood anywhere about.”

The early Spanish explorers did not mention encountering natives between Pilarcitos Creek and Pacifica.



Corral de Tierra - After the Mission in San Francisco was established in 1776 and continuing through 1833 when their last roundup was held, the Mission Dolores ran cattle on this coastal area. They called it “Corral de Tierra,” or the earth corral, because the mountains hemmed in the herds and kept them in one general location. In 1839 the Mexican Governor granted all the land from Medio Creek to Montara Mountain to Francisco Guerrero-Palomares, a Mexican soldier who had served in the army. He married Josefa de Haro, the daughter of one of the Alcaldes of Yerba Buena, as San Francisco was called at that time.



By Wm J Lewis - San Mateo County Property Maps Portal, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=77266413>



He lived in San Francisco, but built an adobe home on Denniston Creek, where the brussels sprouts fields now lie. In 1911 the adobe was demolished in spite of efforts by a Stanford University curator to raise the \$300 that would have been needed to preserve it.

Because of his reputation for fairness and his expertise in land issues, Guerrero was often called to testify in cases involving contested titles. Ironically, his unique standing may have led to his death, and within a few decades, the Americans managed to sue or negotiate the Spanish-speaking Californians out of almost all their holdings. In 1851, in a shocking event, he was murdered in the city because of a land dispute, and the land passed to his widow.



Col. Jonathan Stevenson's special regiment sailed around Cape Horn to California in 1847. The colonel's instructions were to take part in the American occupation and to make the inhabitants "feel that we come as deliverers."

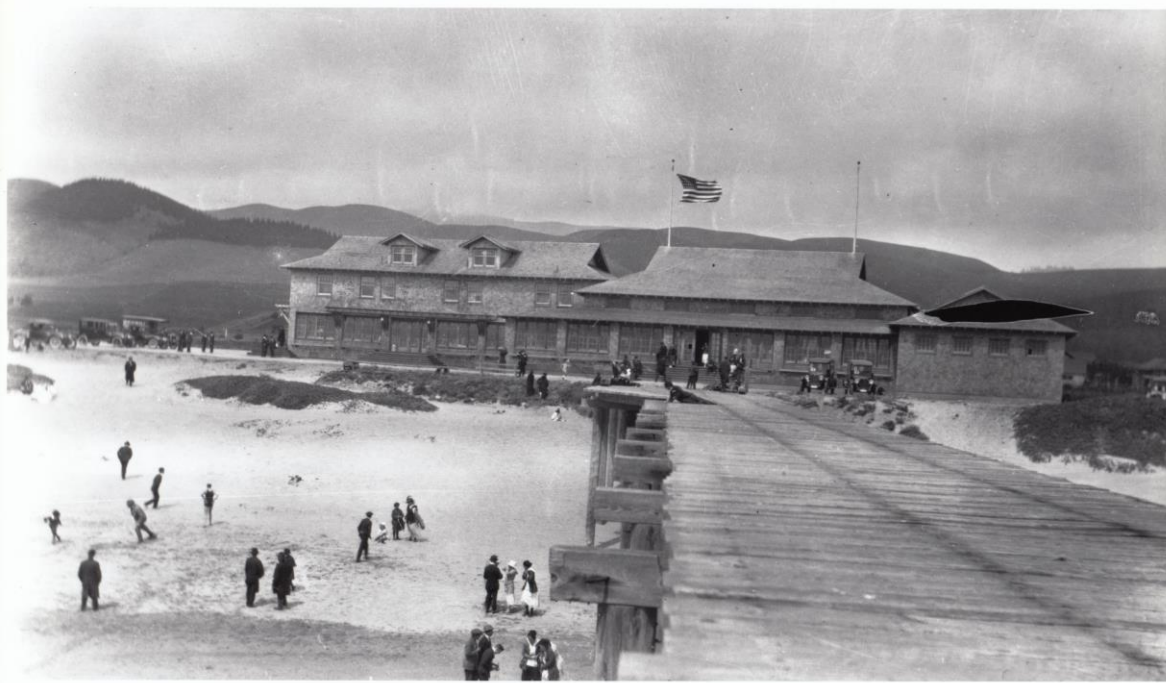
There were two American men in that regiment who were to be important for the Coastside – James Denniston and Josiah P. Ames. When they were discharged from service, they both tried prospecting for gold, but were unsuccessful and returned to San Francisco.



James Denniston married Josefa Guerrero-Palomares in 1853 and became the owner of the land grant she had inherited. He began farming the coastal areas, with grain, potatoes, vegetables, and dairy. He was very successful as a farmer, but had difficulty getting his produce to market in the city.

Denniston built the first wharf on Half Moon Bay, on the inland side of Pillar Point. It was called Denniston Landing or Potato Wharf. Steamers stopped there to load produce in the 1850s.

Barbara VanderWerf tells an exciting story of how San Francisco's Committee of Vigilance was coming after one of Denniston's friends who they thought was an accomplice to murder. Denniston who believed his friend, arranged an escape over Montara Mountain to his adobe. Then, with his brother-in-law, they fled south to Santa Barbara, where they were both arrested. Later they were both tried and found innocent.



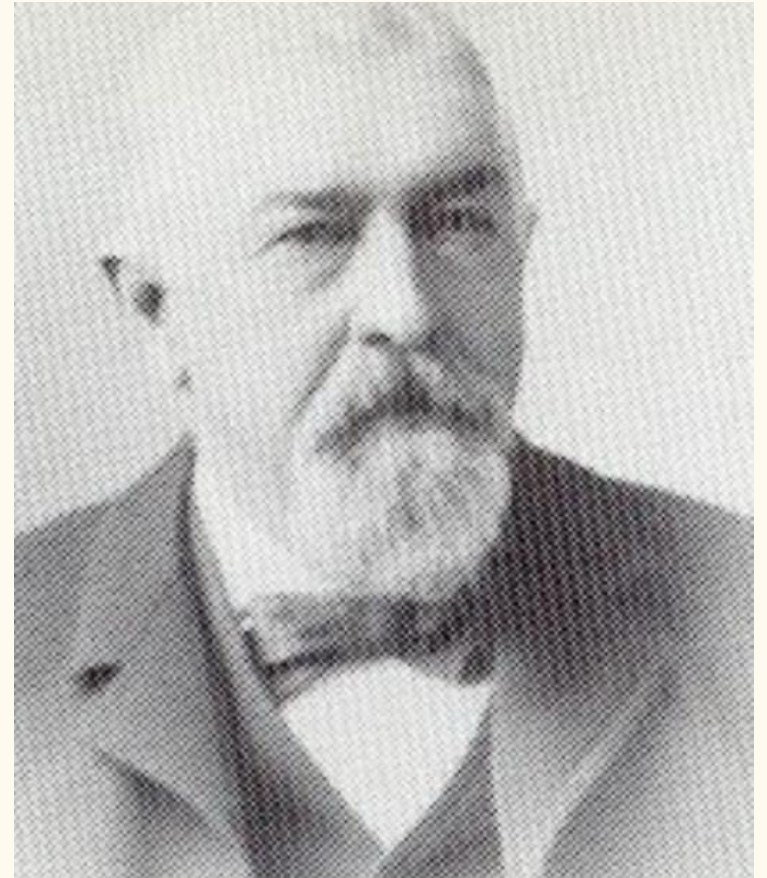
In 1865, San Francisco newspapers heralded Denniston's agricultural accomplishments with stories about a record-breaking head of lettuce from his farm, measuring five feet, eight inches around and weighing in at 41 pounds.

Denniston went on to become very wealthy. He represented San Mateo County in the Legislature from 1860-1864. He died in 1869, and the land was divided among Josefa and her two sons. She received the southern part and it was farmed by her father-in-law for some time.

After Ames built a larger wharf, Denniston's wharf became known as Old Landing, and it deteriorated and soon was no longer used.

Denniston's friend Josiah P. Ames came to the area, probably invited by Denniston. Ames built a wharf at the mouth of Medio Creek in 1868 that replaced the Old Landing. The community that grew up around it, called Amesport, was successful for many years, shipping potatoes and other crops to San Francisco.

Ames also became a state legislator, and a judge. He continued to farm but the potato crop had problems and the wharf eventually closed. He left the area to become the Warden of San Quentin Prison.





The Coastside has welcomed immigrants from many directions. After the Spanish, immigrants in the later half of the 19th Century included Irish, Chinese, Italians, English, Japanese, and Portuguese.

The Portuguese immigrants during this time came from the Azores, small islands in the Atlantic Ocean. Many tried gold prospecting, worked as farm laborers, and were able to purchase land after a few years. Others established a whaling station at Pillar Point.

The Portuguese hunted whales offshore, taking small boats out to kill the animals and then towing them back to shore. There they rendered the blubber into oil in large cauldrons. Activity at the station, which was near Denniston's Old Landing, varied from year to year.

After the new petroleum oil reduced the need for whale oil, the whalers dispersed to farms all around the Coastside.

The farmers who bought land in El Granada planted eucalyptus trees as windbreaks and to provide a landscape with tall trees that looked more like their home countries. Enthusiasm for tree planting grew throughout the 1870s, with the establishment of nurseries and the government providing financial incentives to add trees.

Many people were induced to invest in eucalyptus plantations since there was a need to find a new source of timber once the major redwood groves were cut.

Eucalyptus trees from Australia were touted for their speed of growth and their ability to absorb water (thus reducing swamps and the dangers of malaria) and were thought to be a good source of masts for ships and timber for building construction.



This is a picture of Gum Tree Lane. These eucalyptus were planted in the 1800s. It went from the coast near the end of Coronado up to Quarry Park. This row of trees lasted for a long time, with a few remaining today where it crossed Cabrillo.

Ahead

The Ocean Shore Railroad



Artichokes and Gangsters



Protecting Granada's Character



Thank you very much. My thanks to Barbara Vanderwerf and all who have studied local history!

