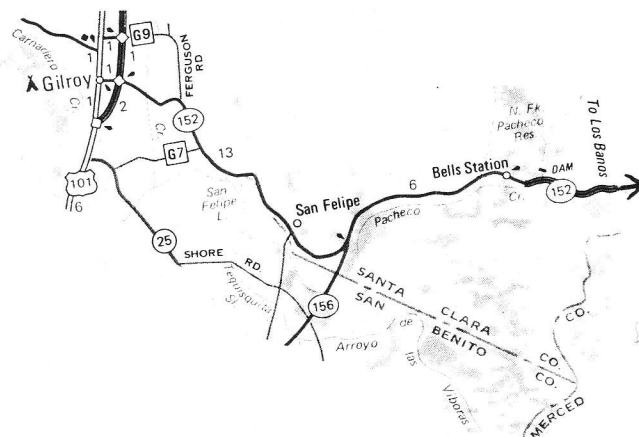


PACHECO PAST:

A History of the Gateway to Santa Clara County



by **CHUCK MYER**

California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

Chuck Myer
761 Williamsburg Way
Gilroy, CA 95020-6343
(408) 847-3266

PREFACE

Trail, cattle path, toll road, stagecoach route, 2-lane highway, 4-lane freeway. Such is the "path of history" for Pacheco Pass, the historic gateway at the southeastern edge of Santa Clara County.

The story of the Pass is the story of California, the story of sturdy Mexican ranchers who battled to tame the land of a new state, of pioneers who spanned the continent with the Pony Express, stagecoach lines, telegraph poles, railroads and even bicycle mail routes. It is the story of Don Francisco Pérez Pacheco, Andrew Firebaugh, Lafayette Bell, Henry Miller and the Bisceglias. And today it is the story of Paula Fatjo, John Scherrer, Leonard Caetano and the Zangers: the genetic and spiritual descendants who work the land, provide for the economic vitality and the safety of its citizens.

"Pacheco Past" is their story, and it is our story.

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CHUCK MYER
761 WILLIAMSBURG WAY
GILROY, CA 95020-6343
(408) 847-3266 (H)
(408) 848-0251 (W)

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"PACHECO PAST:"

A History of the Gateway to Santa Clara County

by

Chuck Myer

Nearly every California traveler has used the stretch of State Highway 152 known as Pacheco Pass, stretching from Los Banos to Gilroy. Far more than just a link between the two cities, the Pacheco Pass Highway is a gateway to Santa Clara County, and has served for a century and a half as the major link between the coastal route and the inland route between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The history of Pacheco Pass is as colorful as the hills that dominate its vistas and punctuate its twists and turns. For the history of Pacheco Pass is the history of California: a tale of beauty and tragedy for the Indians, the Mexicans, the cowboys, the land barons, the businessmen and modern-day commuters. Encased in its pavement is the bloodshed of innocents, and the dreams of a better life: a mirror of life in harder times past, and the hard realities of today.

POINTS OF INTEREST ALONG THE PASS

Pacheco Pass Highway spans forty-two miles between Interstate 5 and Highway 101. As one travels west into Santa Clara County, a number of notable and historic points of interest meet the eye:

The San Luis Reservoir covers almost 13,000 acres and has over 65 miles of shoreline. Half a billion dollars has gone into this massive water supply project, the largest off-stream reservoir in the United States. The capacity of the reservoir is over 2 million acre-feet, with a maximum depth up to 274 feet behind a dam 385 feet in height.

The reservoir is surrounded by the Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area. A lavish visitor's center waits on the eastern shoreline at Romero Outlook. Access to the western edge of the reservoir is available at a boat ramp off of Dinosaur Point Road, just before the entrance into Santa Clara County. Off in the distance is Quien Sabe Point, which translates into a phrase describing much of the area's history: "Who knows?"

The pass itself is at the County line, with an elevation of 1368 feet above sea level. Then five miles downhill and a drop of 1000 feet, around "Dead Man's Curve" to a small cafe, closed for two years due to remodelling. The sign outside says "Bell Station;" the picture of a bell on the sign belies the fact that this historic stage stop was known as Bell's Station, the outpost at the end of a toll road operated by Lafayette F. Bell.

To the south is Lovers' Leap (elevation 1160), a jagged, sharp tooth of a peak which kindles the imagination and gives silent testimony to the legend of a broken-hearted Indian who threw himself from its ridge. Behind it stands

the Pacheco Peak lookout at 2772 ft.

Farther west is the California Department of Forestry's Pacheco Station, and behind it is Henry W. Coe State Park, and Gilroy Hot Springs, another historic site bruised by current controversy.

Nearby is Pacheco Reservoir, the result of a dam of the north fork of the Pacheco Creek, which forks in all four directions from this location. The western fork follows the roadway to Casa de Fruta.

At Casa de Fruta, a sprawling "orchard resort" below the mountain pass, hundreds of young families unload their children into a petting zoo and onto a narrow gauge choo-choo train, the only railroad to be built along the famed roadway. They file into "Casas" of Coffee, of Burger, of Vino, of Sweets, sampling the fruits of the magic orchard and recharging its cash registers. Nearby, unnoticed, a historical marker placed by the Native Daughters of the Golden West silently marks the site of the artesian well that made it all possible.

Down the road, a fork in the road known as the "Don Pacheco Y." Highway 156 veers south into San Benito County. At the crossroads is a faded picture of Don Pacheco himself, smiling down on an abandoned motel that bore his name, built to copy the architectural style of the old missions and now standing in ruins itself.

In the daylight test section beyond, cars turn their headlights on at all times as they pass the fruit and vegetable "farmer's market" stands along the way. A few miles to the west lies the old outpost of San Felipe (elevation 182 feet), and beyond it the smooth waters of San Felipe Lake (or Soap Lake to the old-timers). To the north now is the entrance to the South County's

landfill area, projected to be filled before the end of the century. Past it are the Mistral and San Ysidro Vineyards, valuable viticultural resources protected by the State of California.

Now the road turns past San Ysidro, or "Old Gilroy," the spot where the County's first white settler, John Cameron Gilroy, made his home with his Spanish heiress bride. Here under a huge sycamore tree is the 133-year-old San Ysidro School, which until 1965 was the oldest independent school district in Santa Clara County.

Finally, the present town of Gilroy can be seen - first the large grain elevators and cogeneration towers of the large garlic processing plants, then the service stations and roadside coffee shops surrounded by trucks, and then the city itself.

PRE-HISTORY TO HISTORY

From prehistoric days, coastal Indian tribes used the pass and traded with other tribes at its crossroads. Where the Pacheco Creek flows in four directions at the foot of the hills, so did the Indian trading paths. The Yokuts were the predominant tribe in this area, although recent evidence of the presence of the Ohlone and Costanoans gives us reason to believe different tribes interacted in this area. The most popular trading point was the artesian spring (now at Casa de Fruta) known by the Indians as Bright Bubbling, where the Costanoan Indians met and traded with the Valley Yokuts. The coastal Costanoans offered fish and abalone to the Yokuts, who brought pelts and acorns to exchange.

In the 1790s, the Spanish padres used the pass on their treks to San Joaquin valley, stopping at the artesian well on the way up. To wash off the alkali trail dust, they used the natural baths ("Los Baños del Padre Arroyo" - which became Los Banos) on the other side.

Spanish explorer Lt. Gabriel Moraga was the first white man to cross the pass and record it officially. He chose the name San Luis Gonzaga Pass, after the patron saint of scholars. The date was June 21, 1805. (State historic marker #829 on Romero Overlook at San Luis Reservoir, placed by the Native Daughters of the Golden West on June 18, 1969, after the opening of San Luis Dam, denotes that famous crossing.)

Many mistakenly assume that Pacheco Pass is named after Romualdo Pacheco, who briefly served as the twelfth governor of California in 1875. But the pass was named after wealthy landowner Don Francisco Pérez Pacheco, who came to California from Mexico in 1819 (and was no relation to Governor Romualdo).

An artillery soldier in the Mexican army, Francisco helped to defend the missions by working as a gun carriage maker. He became a respected citizen in Monterey, active in civic affairs. He began applying for land grants in the 1820s, and began piecing together his land holdings (starting with Rancho Ausaymas y San Felipe) through grants in the 1830s.

Pacheco also owned Soap Lake, so called for the alkali used to make soap which was present in the water. José Maria Sanchez, to whom Rancho Llano del Tequesquite was granted in 1835, ran a soap business with Thomas Oliver Larkin at the lake.

The Rancho San Luis Gonzaga was one of the wealthiest ranchos, and Francisco's son Juan Pérez Pacheco (with Captain José María Mejía) was granted



*Portrait of Don Francisco Pérez
Pacheco, by Leonardo Barbieri.*

this area from the Mexican governor Manuel Micheltorena on November 4, 1843. When he died in 1855, the land reverted to his father.

The famous one-story San Luis Gonzaga Adobe was built in 1844 by Pacheco's son, Don Juan Pérez Pacheco. It had gun turrets to protect it from Indian attack, and soon it became a rest stop for cowboys. It survived well into the twentieth century until being threatened with inundation by the San Luis Dam and Reservoir.

Francisco Pacheco soon amassed 150,000 acres of land. He could ride a horse from Gilroy to Los Banos and never leave his property. The cattle path became a cowboy trail during Pacheco's day. Coming over the pass, the road passed through his Rancho San Luis Gonzaga (48,000 acres on both sides of the pass) and his Rancho Ausaymas y San Felipe, then on towards Rancho Llano del Tequesquite and into the Las Animas and San Ysidro land grants near Gilroy.

The Mexican government has reasons for its generosity to Pacheco, however. The government wanted Pacheco to settle along the pass, and control hostile Indians who proved to be a threat to the Mexican economy. Pacheco's cattle ranch soon sprawled over both sides of the mountain, and he raised cattle which were herded to the mining operations in the Sierra Nevada.

In 1851 or 1852, "undesirables" driven out of San Francisco tied up and robbed the Pachecos, making off with \$18,000 in gold dust. Pacheco moved his wife and daughter Lola to Monterey shortly thereafter. He died in 1860.

THE PACE PICKS UP ON THE PASS

California's history was starting to take a dramatic turn. In 1846,

during the conflict between American and Mexican forces, Union Colonel John Charles Frémont crossed the pass with his troops heading into the San Joaquin Valley.

On the eve of statehood in 1849, the sleepy land of California suddenly woke up with the glitter of gold in its eyes, and the dusty trail was destined to start getting a lot more traffic. The 49ers were a hungry bunch, and the demand for beef sent hundreds of head of cattle over the pass towards the Sierras for slaughter. In 1851, there was a brief gold rush on the Pass itself, and in 1853, gold was discovered in Kern County, which sent many San Franciscans, like cable car inventor Andrew Hallidie, over the Pass with a southern destination. In 1856, a large earthquake rumbled through the Pass, destroying the original San Luis House adobe on the San Luis Gonzaga grant.

In 1856-57, California pioneer Andrew Davidson Firebaugh built a toll road over the pass. Firebaugh, born in Virginia 1823, came west and built himself quite a transportation monopoly. He owned and ran the ferry crossing of the San Joaquin River used by stagecoaches near what is now the town of Firebaugh. He doubled his power by creating the toll road from Pacheco Creek which led over Pacheco Pass to the ferry crossing in Firebaugh. A tavern was built near the Pacheco tollgate by William Hollenbeck (after whom Hollenbeck's Rock, later Lovers Leap, was named). A telegraph station was added after the Pacific and Atlantic Company built a line over Pacheco Pass in 1859.

Firebaugh went back east in 1860, to marry Susan Burgess, later returning to California to try his luck in sawmill, tobacco and beef enterprises in the Pajaro Valley area and Fresno. He sold his Pacheco Pass interests to B.T.C. Brandon. Lafayette F. Bell, who had worked for Firebaugh, bought the Pacheco

Pass Turnpike Company, including the road, stagecoach station and tavern in 1863 for \$4,000, from Brandon's heirs. He took over the toll road and station stop, which became known as Bell's Station after a post office was added in 1873. A plaque marks the spot which may be the last California placename in which "station" does not indicate the presence of a railroad. According to Norene Buck, who ran the Bell Station restaurant between 1978 and 1990, about 300 members of E Clampus Vitus turned out on the day in 1985 when the plaque was unveiled.

Lafayette Bell also had a hand in the birth of the new town at the end of the road: Gilroy. In 1868, Bell sold some of his land to W.L. Hoover, who divided it into city lots and sold them to settlers who would soon incorporate Santa Clara County's southernmost city.

Meanwhile, the pass was being considered as a possible railroad route. The toll road stayed in operation until 1878, when Santa Clara County and Merced County bought it and put in a new public road.

On September 16, 1857, a New Yorker named John Butterfield signed a contract with the United States Post Office Department to provide transportation between Missouri and San Francisco. He joined Henry Wells and William Fargo to form the American Express company. Wells Fargo bank was formed later when Wells and Fargo broke off from American Express.

The first overland mail line route ran from Memphis across the southern part of the nation to the southeastern corner of California, up through Los Angeles through the San Joaquin Valley. It crossed the mountains over Pacheco Pass towards the coastal region, where it met El Camino Real in Gilroy, and turned north to San Francisco. The 2600 mile trip from St. Louis to San

Francisco could be run in 23 days, 23½ hours.

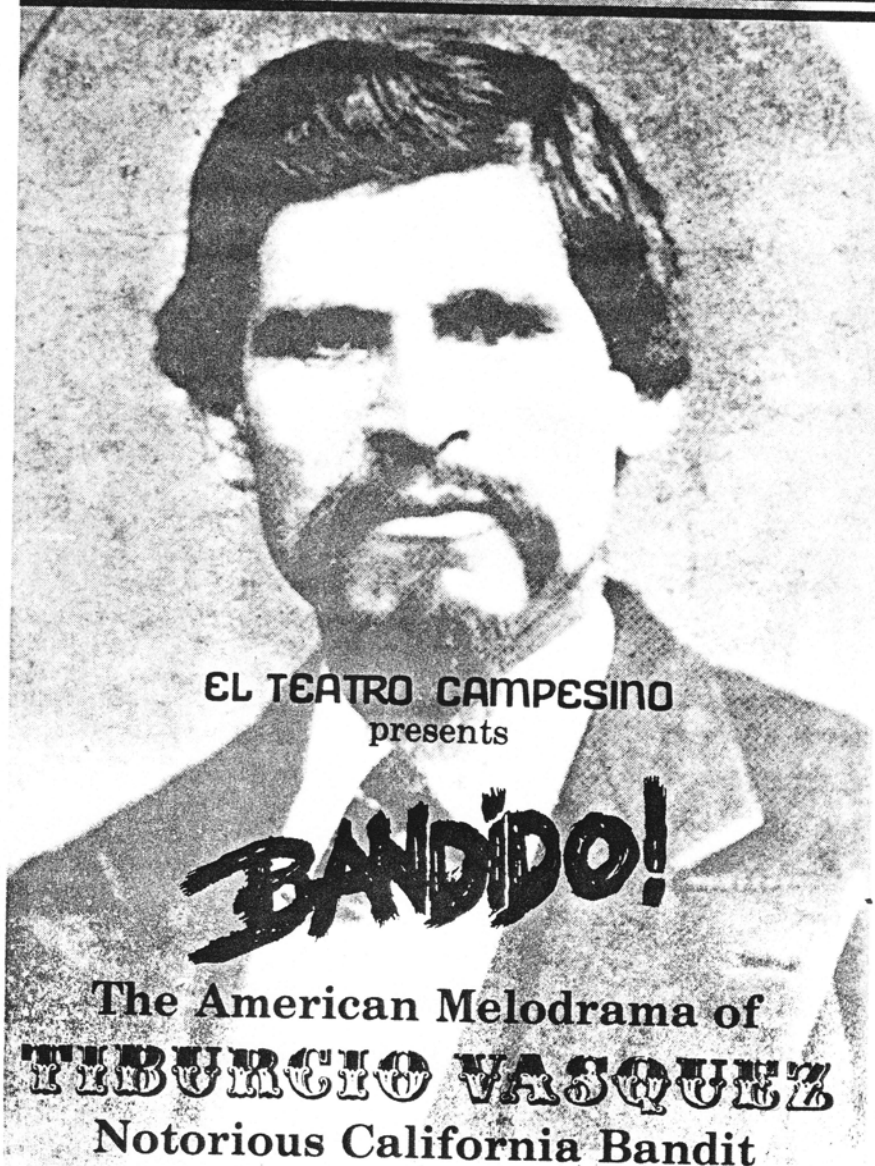
The stage ran from September 14, 1858 to January 1861, when the company's assets were coveted by Southern sympathizers in the Civil War. The last Butterfield Transcontinental Stage Line run was on March 6, 1861. A plaque honoring Butterfield was laid at the end of Pacheco Pass at the junction with El Camino Real on April 27, 1985 by E Clampus Vitus.

¡BANDIDOS!

With the advent of the stagecoach came stagecoach holdups. Pacheco Pass may may have been home to notorious bandits such as Tiburcio Vasquez and Joaquin Murietta. Murietta, the most infamous name at the time, is said to have holed out along Pacheco Pass around 1853 at the San Luis Gonzaga Rancho after eluding a posse all the way along El Camino Real. Legend has it that he escaped by cutting his way out of a tent house before they arrived.

Murietta, it turns out, was mostly a mythical figure, but Vasquez was well documented as real. He was born of a noble family in 1835 in Monterey, but because of historical circumstances, he became a horse thief and stagecoach robber at a young age. Sentenced to San Quentin for horse stealing in 1857, he soon escaped, but returned there several times during his life of crime. In 1871, he and his companions robbed the Visalia stage along Pacheco Pass at Soap Lake (now known as San Felipe Lake), about 5 miles from Gilroy. The law caught up with him near Santa Cruz, where he was shot in the chest and his partner killed. Badly wounded, he escaped nonetheless, riding 60 miles to his hideout in La Cantua Canyon, south of Pacheco Pass in San Benito County.

WANTED!



EL TEATRO CAMPESINO
presents

BANDIDO!

The American Melodrama of
TIBURCIO VASQUEZ
Notorious California Bandit

written and directed by
LUIS VALDEZ

Two years later, with his gang strengthened by new recruits, he robbed the store at Firebaugh's Ferry, on the other end of the line in San Joaquin County. He was finally captured May 13, 1874, charged with murder and hung on March 19, 1875, though he maintained that he never took a life. With him died knowledge of the location of the "Vazquez treasure," sacks of gold never found to this day. Perhaps they lie buried near Pacheco Pass.

In 1855, the first of two famed naturalists visited the area. James C. "Grizzly" Adams was spotted taking two of his bears over the pass, one domesticated, the other tied to his wagon.

The legendary cattle baron Henry Miller drove his cattle from San Joaquin and Santa Rita over the pass and up El Camino Real to the slaughterhouse ("Butchertown") in San Francisco. From the formation of Miller & Lux in 1858 until his death in 1916, this poor German immigrant accumulated more land than any other person in the nation, including parts of most of the land grants along Pacheco Pass. Like Pacheco before him, he could ride for days without ever leaving his own property. At one point, he owned virtually every building in Los Banos. According to one story, Miller stopped frequently at the Old Adobe Inn, three miles east of the pass. The daughters of the owner used to fight over who got to shine his boots, since he would leave a \$20 gold piece in the toe as a tip.

The years 1863 and 1864 brought a drought to the area. According to one report, the slough near Soap Lake was lined with skeletons of cattle that were unable to pull themselves out of the mud. Later, other business interests became interested in the area. The Spreckels Sugar Company bought land near Soap Lake, where 2000 acres were planted in sugar beets.

With the advent of the telegraph in 1861, the era of the Pony Express faded away, and the railroad soon began to replace the stagecoach. A somewhat humorous chapter in the Pass's rich history occurred in 1894, when a railroad strike cut off Fresno from San Francisco. Arthur Banta, owner of a Fresno bicycle shop, kept the Pony Express rolling with bicycles. The Bicycle Mail hit the trail between for 200 miles of dirt roads between July 7 and July 18 of that year, until the strike ended. The unique transportation may have been set up rather hurriedly, it seems: the 25c postal stamp used for bicycle mail parcels had "San Fransisco" misspelled.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the turn of the century, the "Mountain House" was the place to stop at the top of the pass, for rest and refreshment. In 1908, the Bisceglia brothers crossed the pass, stopping at the rich artesian well and staring in wonder at the flowering mustard planted by the padres to mark the path of the missions. Realizing the value of the rich soil around it, they planted the first orchard at Casa de Fruta, with financial backing from Bank of America founder A. P. Giannini.

Ralph Milliken, an accountant for the historic cattle firm of Miller and Lux, came to the area in 1910, and wrote many articles on the pass which appear today in the Milliken Museum in Los Banos.

John Muir, the father of the Sierra Club, visited the pass on his travels, and wrote in his diary, "It's folly to translate into words the splendor of nature. The scenery and all of nature in the Pass is fairly

enchanted. Strange and beautiful mountain ferns are there, low in dark cañons and high upon rocky sunlit peaks; banks of blooming shrubs, and sprinklings and gatherings of garment flowers, precious and pure as ever enjoyed the sweets of a mountain home."

But to Muir's dismay in the 1910s, America began its long courtship with motor vehicles, and in the 1920s, the first motor vehicles ambled over Pacheco Pass Route. In those days it was Route 32, between Gilroy and Califa (near Chowchilla). In 1923, Santa Clara and Merced Counties combined to build the main route for Highway 152, in anticipation of higher traffic volumes to come. Many of the larger land grants began to break up into subdivisions in the 1920s.

In the 1920s, the San Luis Gonzaga Adobe became well known as the Old Adobe Inn, and advertised "Good Eats." Bing Crosby leased some of the San Luis Gonzaga land in 1947, near where his foreman coined the placename, "Dinosaur Point." In 1948, Paula Fatjo, a fifth generation descendant of Don Pacheco, moved into the adobe, establishing her claim as being virtually the only descendant to own land from an original land grant from the Mexican government. To this day, she lives on the land of her ancestor, Don Pacheco, where she raises Arabian horses. Remnants of the old stagecoach road and toll station are still in evidence on the property.

In 1962, she lost 7,000 acres of her ranch, the first of which was dynamited by an unlikely culprit: John F. Kennedy. As part of the groundbreaking ceremonies for the San Luis Dam, Kennedy and Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. "broke the ground" by detonating explosives to make way for the dam. (A historical "Ode on the Groundbreaking of San Luis Dam" by Charles B.

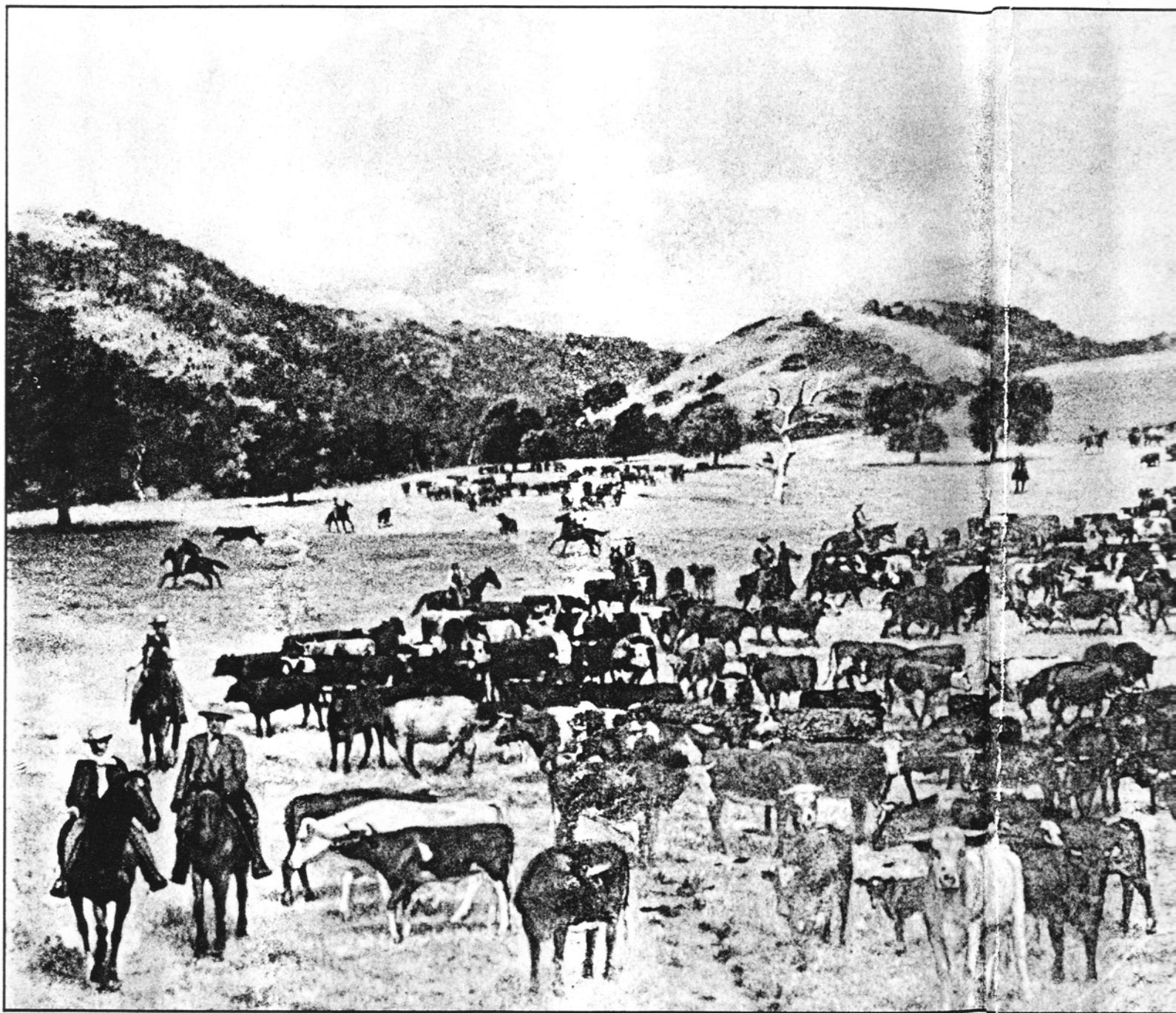
Garrigus, was cast in bronze and later placed near the Pacheco Pass plaque.)

Paula Fatjo tried to save the stately adobe from certain inundation by moving it ten miles uphill to "dry land." On December 6, 1962, it was hoisted onto a trailer for the perilous journey. Just short of one mile from its intended site, the adobe walls fell apart, rendering it worthless. The ruins still stand in her backyard, marked by a reset 1931 Native Sons of the Golden West plaque.

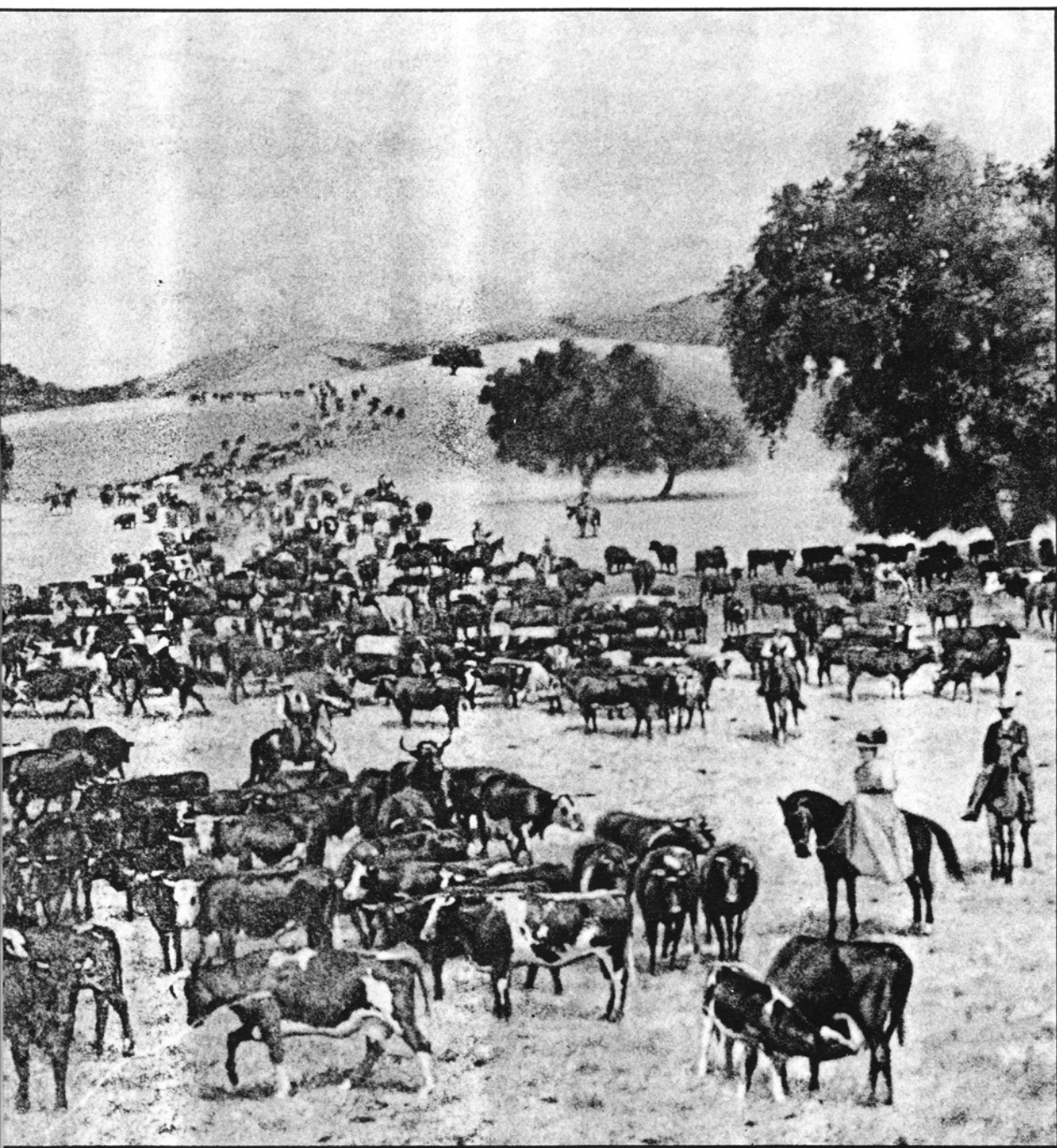
On April 20, 1968, the dam was dedicated, and in 1969 the reservoir was filled. The highway was rerouted around it. On May 12, 1989, the San Luis Reservoir was renamed for a veteran Congressman that helped get it funded. It is now officially the "B.F. Sisk San Luis Reservoir," but few are aware of the new name, and virtually no one uses it. The forebay is named after J.E. O'Neill (1892-1961) and the pumping station after retired State water engineer William R. Gianelli.

The San Luis Reservoir brought in more visitors interested in boating and hunting activities. Sammy Dietz rebuilt the old structure at Bell Station into a restaurant, but saved the original chimney.

Twentieth century ranchers took over the land and the ranches once owned by the Henry Miller. One is John Scherrer of Gilroy, whose Rancho los Laureles is on "Whiskey Flat," west of Paula Fatjo's ranch. Fenton O'Connell, one of Gilroy's most notable citizens, ran cattle on 8500 acres along Pacheco Pass for half a century. His "El Rancho San Benito" covered the Lomerias Muertas ranch and much of the Rancho Llano del Tequesquite. One of the finest judges of cattle in the region, he was also one of the area's biggest philanthropists. He was inducted into Gilroy's Hall of Fame before his death in



Rodeo on the San Felipe Ranch by Andrew Hill, 1909. The locale of the painting is one mile east and north of Casa de Fruta on property owned by Fenton O'Connell on the Pacheco Pass.



1991. One of O'Connell's prize possessions was a three foot by four foot painting of a cattle drive over Pacheco Pass painted by noted turn-of-the-century San José artist/photographer Andrew Hill (see Figure 3).

The Pass soon gained notoriety as a dangerous road. When Interstate 5 was being completed the 1970s, Pacheco Pass became even more important for those making the drive from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA

Poor road conditions or driver error are usually assumed to be at fault for the hundreds of fatalities that have occurred along Pacheco Pass. Author Antoinette May and others think it's something else: Ghosts.

In her book "Haunted Houses and Wandering Ghosts of California," published by the Examiner Division of the Hearst Corporation, May speculates that drivers have been affected by apparitions of the dead even as they drive. This causes terror and leads to erratic driving and accidents.

Haunted houses are one thing, but haunted highways?

"The Pacheco Pass area has a history of battles," May says, "involving Indians, Spaniards, Mexicans, and American settlers, many robberies by notorious highwaymen and a number of public hangings. Violence continues to this day in the form of numerous automobile accidents."

It is true that the area saw much bloodshed in the days of Tiburcio Vasquez and the Pachecos. But can the accidents on the same site be more than just coincidence?

May, who specializes in psychic research, relies heavily on Sylvia Brown

of the Nirvana Foundation for her material. Brown's experiences while driving near Dinosaur Point along the Pass are the most vivid:

"Her sense of terror increased as images began to appear. She saw a little girl in a covered wagon cowering with her fists pressed against her eyes while Indians raged around the wagon train. Her sense of hopelessness was overwhelming. Scenes from a series of battles...all seemed to pass before her eyes in brutal succession."

Others with similar experiences have filed affidavits using phrases like "Desperate anticipation," "awful thoughts of death," "strong sense of fear," "lost, panicked and dizzy," "trapped, alienated," and "nameless terror."

Some local residents give merit to this argument. Bill Jorgenson, former director of the Los Banos Chamber of Commerce, says he has heard many convincing stories from old-timers on the mountain, including Vince Hillmer of Los Banos. (Hillmer has carved quite a chunk of history himself, having appeared in "Taming of the Shrew" with Elizabeth Taylor, and having married the half-sister of Shah Pahlevi, Princess Fatimeh of Iran.)

An ironic part of the premise is that a "change of local time" occurs on the Pass, causing drivers to experience a speeding up or loss of time. Brown says this is caused by "a collection of highly emotional experiences that have occurred in the area. Over the years, the energy from intense emotions has collected and become self-sustaining. This energy, if sufficiently strong, causes a warp in the psycho-emotional structure of space-time. The warp acts like a gravitational field, pulling other waves of emotion."

Ironically, Ron Chaffee of the Highway Patrol also states the problem in relation to time: "If you're trying to make up time, don't make it up on

Pacheco Pass." A Gilroy Dispatch editorial used an interesting metaphor: "The Pacheco Pass monster has again reared its ugly head."

"What obsession leads a driver to speed on a mountain highway?" asks May. "Could it be a compulsion to get out of there as quickly as possible?"

A highway patrol commander, with the appropriate name John Law, summed it up: "I know people who won't drive Pacheco Pass. They're scared to death of it."

THE PRESENT

Most Californians are now aware of the terrible accidents that are commonplace along this stretch of highway. Over 20,000 vehicles use it every day, many of them trucks hauling produce. From 1970 to March 1992, 2,093 people were injured in accidents on Pacheco Pass, and sadly, 179 lives were lost during that time (See Appendix). Two-thirds of the accidents have occurred between the Don Pacheco "Y" and the pass itself at the county line. After a relatively safe spell in the mid-80s, the number of tragic deaths on that ominous strip increased again in the late 1980s. One highly-publicized accident involved the heirs to the Gallo wine fortune; others killed James Barrett, the fire chief of Carmel, and George Dexter, the designer of McDonald's "Golden Arches."

It was clear that something had to be done. Citizen's groups, politicians and newspaper editorial writers took up the cause. The Highway 152 Committee, chaired by Ed Gould of San José, was formed in August 1978. San Juan Bautista resident Leonard Caetano took over as chair in 1981 to the

present, organizing members from Los Banos, Hollister, San Juan Bautista, Gilroy, San José, Cupertino, Santa Nella. The group printed buttons ("I survived Pacheco Pass"), handbills and bumper stickers and engaged the support of local officials. They appeared at hearings of the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency, and regional and state agencies.



Gradually, change began to take place. A daylight test section was established, and large warning signs ("Passing is Poison on Pacheco Pass") were posted to alert motorists and keep track of the tragic toll. Soon, transportation planners in San José and Sacramento began to give improvements to Highway 152 their top priority, despite rebuttals from proponents of other freeway projects in Santa Clara County.

State Assemblyman Rusty Areias of Los Banos has always had quite an interest in the safety and history of Pacheco Pass. As a dairy farmer, he knew of the road's importance to agricultural interests in his 25th district. He became a champion of the cause. Santa Clara County Supervisor Susie Wilson and State Senators Al Alquist and Henry Mello also lent support to the cause.

Widening of the first section, from the summit to Bell Station, was completed in February 1984 at a cost of \$6.5 million.

Danger was not erased by the new roadway, however. In an ironic twist of fate, the major landowner north of the improved roadway, Glenn Mathis, was himself died from injuries in a 1990 automobile accident near his Rancho El

Toro, which includes Bell Station.

Work on the second stretch, from Bell Station to Casa de Fruta, was begun in June 1990. Included in this work was a new four-lane bridge section over Cedar Creek, and improved roadway at the treacherous Walnut Avenue curve. In the summer of 1991, the new Casa de Fruta bypass section was opened. On February 28, 1992, the entire stretch, upgraded from two to four lanes from Bell Station to Casa de Fruta, was opened. The total cost for the second portion was \$17 million. But the reward was worth it: the accident rate is down over 90% in 1992.

A dedication ceremony was held on March 13, 1992, at Casa de Fruta, the road stop development that will benefit most directly from the improved roadway.

The Zanger family has owned Casa de Fruta since 1908. From one diner, the development has expanded to a multi-faceted destination stop, including restaurants, stores, wine tasting and recreational vehicle parking.

Self-made attractions in the family include rope tricks by Joe Zanger, and the "World Famous Cup Flipper," Eugene Zanger. After flipping coffee cups in the restaurant for 18½ years, the "Cup Flipper" claims to have flipped cups over a million times, and has appeared on numerous television shows and has been listed in "Ripley's Believe It or Not."

Yet the Zanger's dreams of expansion often butt heads with bureaucratic



land managers. On October 28, 1991, Joseph Zanger, Sr. co-owner of Casa de Fruta, was sentenced to 21 days of weekend jail time for altering the creekbed of Pacheco Creek.

Gene Zanger is a member of the next generation of the family which will take over the development in the next century. His vision for the rest stop includes a water slide attraction, and three times as many spaces for recreational vehicles.

Yet the past is reflected in the rows of rusted farm equipment and antiques that line the property, and echoes of Pacheco Past shine on in the Native American Pow-Wow and Civil War re-enactment that take place on the grounds each year.

INTO THE FUTURE

Having finished upgrading two majors segments of Highway 152, Caltrans, the state's transportation agency, has just one task remaining to complete the makeover of one of Santa Clara County's most dangerous roads. But that link of completion promises to be far more complex -- and costly -- than any of the others.

The third link is located between the "Don Pacheco "Y" (the junction of Highway 156) and Highway 101. San Ysidro School is along the current route. The danger of having large tractor-trailers making a sharp turn near a school is obvious, and the need to realign Route 152 away from this school is a high priority. San Ysidro principal Gene Sakahara was very proactive in seeking

solutions in the 1980s.

In the mid-1980s, a variety of alternate routes for the last link were presented by CalTrans, some of which even realigned the route north of Gilroy. The most likely alternatives, however, involved swinging the route south of Gilroy, and linking it in with Santa Teresa Boulevard (which runs parallel with Monterey Road-El Camino Real all the way to South San José) to connect to Hecker Pass Highway west of Gilroy.

Two of the southern alternatives, dubbed A-1A and A-1B, sweep down into San Benito County. The decision appeared to have narrowed to two. Then in 1990, residents of Dunneville and rural San Benito County began to object to the rerouting into their county, freezing valuable funding for other needed highway projects closer to Hollister. These political obstacles caused CalTrans to begin examining another option, known as the E-line, which would be constructed totally within Santa Clara County. The E-line would create a new 6-lane freeway alongside the old highway (which would become a mere frontage road!) up to Bloomfield Avenue, where the new route would shoot southwest to Highway 101.

On February 26, 1992, the City Council chambers in Gilroy were packed with hundreds of property owners concerned about the future of Pacheco Pass. A Citizens Interest Group for Phase III, also chaired by Leonard Caetano, was there as well. They met with representatives of CalTrans, including District Director Preston Kelley, to give input into finding the best route. Depending on the choice, the price tag could be \$70 million to \$100 million.

The completion of Pacheco Pass lies in the future; perhaps in the next century. Indeed, CalTrans senior engineer Saaïd Fakharzadeh says construction

may not begin until the year 2001. Whatever the case, the vast beauty of the Pacheco Pass area and the energy and creativity of its residents will ensure that the Pacheco Pass of the 21st century will be as rich and colorful as in the 19th and 20th.

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APPENDIX

ACCIDENT HISTORY - STATE ROUTE 152

YEARLY TOTALS
THRU MARCH 1992

BEAT 170 - S.R. 156 EASTWARD TO MERCED COUNTY LINE

PERIOD	ACCIDENTS			VICTIMS		TOTAL
	FATAL	INJURY	PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY	FATAL	INJURED	
1970	5	21	42	11	45	56
1971	2	19	40	2	31	33
1972	7	29	40	13	55	68
1973	3	20	64	7	52	59
1974	1	23	49	1	38	39
1975	4	21	56	4	43	47
1976	4	31	57	8	52	60
1977	3	31	57	4	75	79
1978	0	28	60	0	44	44
1979	4	23	59	8	36	44
1980	4	23	36	9	53	62
1981	5	24	63	7	61	68
1982	4	22	57	4	52	56
1983	9	30	57	12	60	72
1984	1	37	57	1	65	66
1985	3	25	48	3	25	28
1986	6	26	83	9	41	50
1987	4	35	60	7	57	64
1988	5	39	83	6	73	79
1989	1	44	60	1	95	96
1990	4	38	56	4	83	87
1991	4	26	35	4	50	54
1992	0	1	2	0	1	1
1993						
1994						
1995						
TOTAL	83	1616	1221	125	1182	1312

APPENDIX

ACCIDENT HISTORY - STATE ROUTE 152

YEARLY TOTALS
THRU MARCH 1992

BEAT 160 - GILROY CITY LIMITS TO S.R. 156

PERIOD	ACCIDENTS			VICTIMS		TOTAL
	FATAL	INJURY	PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY	FATAL	INJURED	
1970	1	20	40	2	38	40
1971	1	15	26	1	22	23
1972	3	12	36	4	30	34
1973	3	14	38	3	32	35
1974	1	17	24	1	27	28
1975	1	12	49	1	21	22
1976	2	13	29	2	23	25
1977	4	19	27	8	34	42
1978	4	16	41	4	29	33
1979	2	18	37	2	23	25
1980	1	17	34	3	21	24
1981	1	8	33	1	26	27
1982	0	20	36	0	26	26
1983	2	16	51	7	30	37
1984	3	12	33	3	12	15
1985	2	16	32	2	34	36
1986	0	13	39	0	10	10
1987	0	26	62	0	39	39
1988	0	18	12	0	38	38
1989	1	33	52	1	62	63
1990	4	34	61	5	73	78
1991	4	25	29	4	61	65
1992	0	7	11	0	10	10
1993						
1994						
1995						
TOTAL	40	401	832	54	721	782

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PERSONS CONTACTED

Allen, Norman, City of Gilroy Public Works Director
Arieas, Rusty, State Assemblyman, District 25
Berry, Trevis, Pacheco Pass landowner
Buck, Norene, former Bell Station Cafe operator
Caetano, Leonard, Highway 152 committee
Chaffee, Ron, California Highway Patrol
de la Torre, J. Felix, 25th Assembly Field Representative
Elking, Kim, Bell Station employee
Fakharzadeh, Saa'id, CalTrans project manager
Fatjo, Paula, descendant of Francisco Pacheco
Gilroy, Ben, descendant of John Gilroy
Gonzalez, Tom, San Luis Gonzaga Ranchhand
Hillyer, Vincent, author, Los Banos
Jorgensen, Bill, Los Banos Chamber of Commerce
Kalend, Bunny, descendant of Francisco Pacheco
Kazeminejad, Eraj, CalTrans representative
MacVicar, Robina, Los Banos Chamber of Commerce
Martin, Dora, San Luis Gonzaga ranch horse trainer
Sakahara, Gene, former principal, San Ysidro School
Sawyer, Charles, Milliken Museum, Los Banos
Snar, Pat, Gilroy Museum director
Sousa, Alvaro, Milliken Museum, Los Banos
Scherrer, John, Rancho los Laureles, Pacheco Pass
Zanger, Joseph, Casa de Fruta