

Viewpoints

THE KNIGHTS STAGE CO!

DAILY!  DAILY!

From Redwood City to Pescadero
And Way Stations.

The Stage meets the 9:20 Mail Train. Take this route to La Honda, Harrison and Pescadero, through the redwoods, the most attractive portion of San Mateo County.

Easy Roads. Comfortable Coaches. Competent Drivers. Reasonable Fares.

Yarns by Jim Rapley

The lady on the stagecoach fainted

THIS IS another in a series of yarns from the old ranching days as told to Marion Softky by Jim Rapley, possibly the last of the cowboys who used to run cattle on thousands of acres of the Skyline hills.

SKYLINE OLDTIMER Jim Rapley remembers wonderful summers he spent as a boy with his grandparents at "The Landings," their place at the summit of Old La Honda Road.

These were the stagecoach days when Old La Honda Road carried all the traffic from "Redwood" over the Skyline to the lumbering and ranching communities on the Coastside.

When Rapley was a boy, Sam Stout—"a big red-faced fellow"—drove the four-horse stage over the hill from Redwood City to La Honda and Pescadero. Al Weatherby, who had driven 20 mule teams in Death Valley, ran a freight service with four mules and a wagon. He bought goods for the stores in La Honda and Pescadero and for anyone else who was along his way. Mule teams also hauled redwood boards from Deadfield's mill near Loma Mar to the lumber yard in Palo Alto.

"It was sure dusty," Rapley remembers. "Wagons and cattle drives and everything went over that one road. It was a common sight that these guys all had a bandana handkerchief pulled over their face."

The stagecoach trip from the flatlands "wasn't the most comfortable ride in the world." By the time they got to the top of Old La Honda Road, the passengers were ready for a break. So the wagons and coaches often made a popular but unofficial stop at The Landings.

As Rapley tells it, "By the time they came from Redwood City when they got to the top of the mountain, those women would want someplace to go. They'd go to my grandmother's home and get a drink of water and a sandwich, but it was all free. My grandmother was a very compassionate woman."

Some of Rapley's best yarns come from his father. He tells this one which took place long before he used to visit his grandparents at The Landings as a boy:

"With the hot weather, women were wearing corsets. Well, they're bound up in one of those and sitting straight up. There was a continuous turmoil going on—all these old teamsters at the stage stop and this woman faints.

"So one guy hollers, 'Cut the bodice! Cut the bodice!' With a pocket knife he was ripping the poor gal's corset—or whatever it was.

"I guess when she came to, she passed out all over again." With this punch line, Rapley looks up with a wonderful slow smile.

(Jim Rapley's "Tales from Skyline" will continue for the next several weeks.)