

## The Romies – The First Family of Pebble Beach

by Neal Hotelling

The first family to call Pebble Beach home were the Romies, a family of German emigrants near the end of California's Mexican era. In 1846, just months before the landing of Commodore Sloat at Monterey, John (or as he was then known, Juan) Romie purchased the 4,426.46 acre El Pescadero Rancho from Maria del Carmen Garcia, widow of the original grantee, Fabian Baretto. Barretto received the grant in 1836 and died in 1841. The childless, Maria remarried in 1844 to Juan Madriaga and made her home in Monterey. Having no use for the large Rancho, she happily sold it to the Romies for \$500.



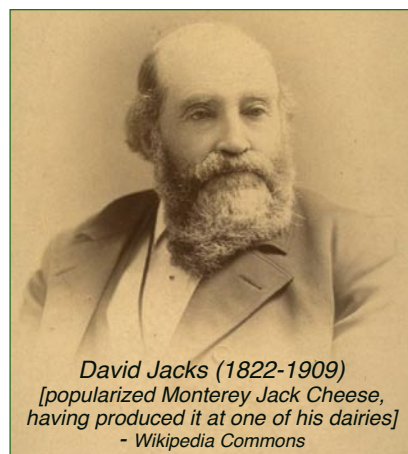
*The John Romie and Jacks Family headstones  
- City of Monterey Cementerio El Encinal*

clerk from Scotland named David Jacks; within the decade, a romance would bloom between Jacks and the young Maria Christina Romie.

The family lived there for several years, but when gold fever hit California in 1848, John Romie was not immune. He headed up to the Sierras to seek his fortune. He died near Placerville of a heart attack on March 21, 1849. Mary and the children lived on the Rancho for a while longer, but eventually moved. The Rancho was sold in an 1853 probate sale for \$4,400 (roughly one dollar per acre) to John C. Gore, a widower from Massachusetts. He raised his two sons on the Rancho for the next six years.

John and his wife Mary did not come directly to Monterey. They left Germany in 1838 with their three young children: Ernest (8), Anita (2) and Charles (1). Their first home in the new world was at Oaxaca in southern Mexico, where they quickly assimilated, becoming known as Juan and Maria. In June 1839, they gave birth to a daughter and provided her with a very Spanish name, Maria Christina Soledad Romie. They left southern Mexico and arrived at Santa Barbara in 1841 and later moved to Monterey, where their son Pablo (Paul) was born in 1843. The growing family purchased the Rancho on March 20, 1846, and from most reports built a home near Stillwater Cove. The house was located near today's fourth fairway, with barns across the creek bed near today's 16th green. It is interesting to note that on the 1850 Census, the Romies had a boarder – a 26-year-old store

The Romies didn't go far. Ernest, a carpenter and Charles, a farmer had moved south to San Luis Obispo. Charles and his friend, Barkley Clements, leased some land on the coast from the Avila family. They built Cave Landing about a mile south of the current town of Avila. The wharf, below a rocky promontory with a warehouse and a derrick type elevator, could raise both people and freight from the landing to where a stage line could take them into the village. After a few years, the partners sold their interests. Charles moved back to Monterey County in the 1860s.



*David Jacks (1822-1909)  
[popularized Monterey Jack Cheese,  
having produced it at one of his dairies]  
- Wikipedia Commons*

On the 1860 Census, Mary was living in Santa Clara with her two youngest children, but that same year, Maria Christina married David Jacks and moved back to Monterey. Jacks was becoming an infamous land baron. In one of his most notorious land deals

## Pebble Beach Company/DMFPO Team Up For 2013 Road Improvement Program

PBC has committed to spend \$1 million in 2013 on road maintenance projects. The planned work includes the following repaving projects to be completed by November 2013:

- Atajo
- Aztec
- Fergusson
- Circle
- Customs
- Dana
- Bird Rock (from Sloat to Colton)
- El Bosque (from Sunridge to Crest)
- Sunridge (from Scenic to Chamisal)
- Scenic (from Sunridge to the Bridge)
- Hawkins
- Lookout
- Madrone
- Parkway
- Rampart
- Sherman

Other Pebble Beach Company Road Projects:

- Congress (17 MD Intersection Improvement)
- Misc. striping, patching, raising manholes

Community Services District Road Projects:

- Colton (PBCSD budget of \$180,000)

2012 Roads (and budget) carried over to 2013:

- Arrowhead Road
- Chaparral Road
- Spanish Bay Road
- Palmero Drive (from 17 MD to Cypress)
- Striping

*The PBC contact for road condition/maintenance is Shawn Casey, Director of Operation Support, 625-8435.*

*Shawn has been with PBC for 33 years and is most knowledgeable about the Forest road system. Planned work is subject to change based on utility projects by PBCSD, adverse weather, or other unexpected conditions.*



## University of California Pine Regeneration Study

Forest residents may be wondering what the Del Monte Forest Conservancy has been up to lately. Some have noticed the vegetation work near Ford Meadow in Pescadero Canyon. A machine called a masticator grinds and chips targeted vegetation like invasive grasses and dense shrubs within the forest understory.

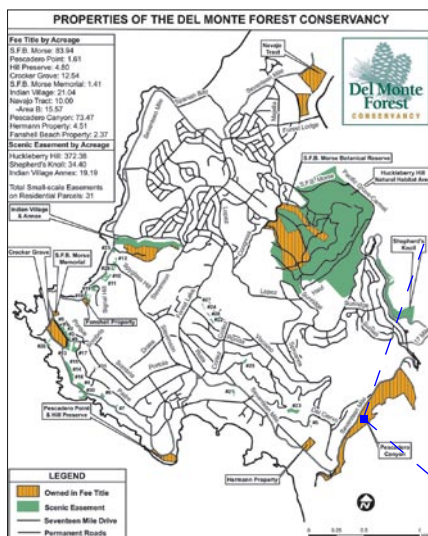
The treatment area is for a University of California lead research study that is underway with oversight by the Conservancy foresters. Professors David Wood from UC Berkeley Pathology and Entomology and Tom Gordon from UC Davis Forest Pathology and Entomology are experimenting with vegetation treatments to Monterey Pine understory species in an attempt to stimulate pine regeneration. There are six plot locations throughout the Monterey area of which five are in Pebble Beach. The professors have chosen two plots with heavy poison oak, two plots with heavy grass, and two plots with heavy shrub.

This work may have drawn some concern as it appears that a fair amount

of the forest understory has been reduced. Conservancy foresters, Dylan Windt and Bill Vaughan have assured the Conservancy that the area treated consists almost entirely of non-native invasive grasses mixed with dense layers of poison oak and invasive shrubs such as yellow-blooming French broom visible along the roadside. An earlier attempt to regenerate pines in this area saw approximately 40 individuals overtopped and out-competed by invasive grasses and dense layers of poison oak.

It is the hope of the Conservancy to learn that mechanical vegetation treatments to invasive grasses and impenetrable shrubs can have a positive influence on Monterey pine regeneration,

especially in areas where the forest is maturing and rapidly becoming less dense.



*Pescadero Canyon Research Area Near Ford Meadow (blue square on map is approximate location of study area above)*



the year before, he purchased, at a legally noticed public auction, the nearly 30 thousand acres of “pueblo lands” that comprised the city of Monterey – and did so for just over \$1,000.

In 1860, the Gores returned to Massachusetts so the home-schooled boys could attend college. Gore retained an agent and put the Rancho on the market for \$10,000 or trade of equal value. Jacks was apparently not in the position to buy the Rancho then. Instead, New York lawyer (and later California Senator) Edward Tompkins, traded his ranch in Binghamton, NY for the Rancho and moved west. After examining the Tompkins ranch, Gore objected and determined to cancel the trade arranged through his agent. Rather than deal with Gore, Tompkins sold the Rancho to Jacks in 1862 for \$10,000 – in a sense, putting it back with the Romie family for the next 18 years, until Jacks sold it in 1880 to the Pacific Improvement Company.

Rather than move back into the home they had known a decade earlier, Maria Christina and David Jacks built a large home in Monterey and had five children. They made millions in Monterey County land deals; eventually their children, who had no children, sold it off or donated some for park lands, like Jacks Peak and Jacks Park.

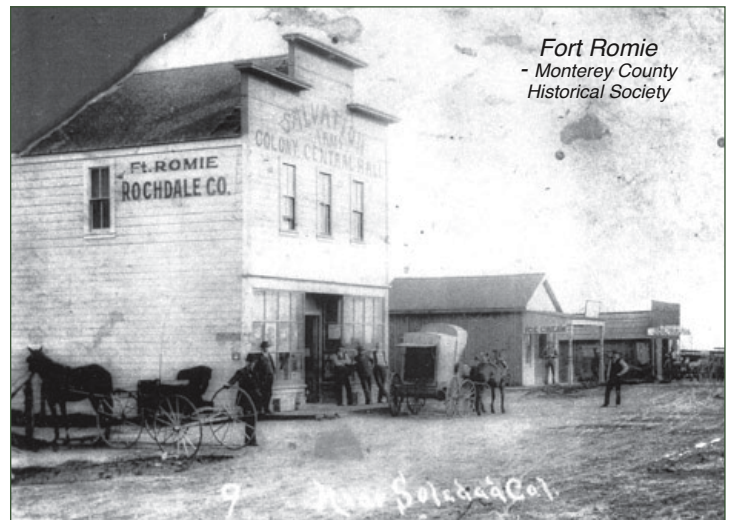
By 1870, Ernest was back in Monterey working at the Elkins Store; Paul was working as a gardener in Monterey and looking after their mother; and Charles was amassing ranchland near Soledad, making his living raising cattle. In the 1889 promotional booklet, “Monterey County: its general features, resources, attractions, and inducements to investors and home seekers,” Charles is recorded as an “essential feature” to the Soledad area.

“A sketch of Soledad without a mention of Charley Romie would be like a play of Hamlet minus the ghost. Not that there is anything ghostly about Mr. Romie’s two hundred pounds avoirdupois, but that he is an essential feature of the place, owning large property interests in the surrounding country, and having unbounded faith in the future of Monterey County. He is a royal entertainer and the prince of good fellows.”

Paul married Harriet Buell in 1878 and went into farming around Soledad, perhaps with his older brother. Ernest was superintendent of a ranch around Castroville by 1880, and their mother, age 78, was then living comfortably within the Jacks household.

Though he never married, Charles apparently had a happy life in the Salinas Valley, served as a county supervisor, and like his more infamous brother-in-law, was able to list his occupation as Capitalist on the 1900 Census. He died at the Abbott Hotel in Salinas on January 5, 1904. He is perhaps best remembered in local history as the person for whom the short-lived Fort Romie was named. In 1897, Romie sold 520 acres to the Salvation Army and helped create a community that would allow the poor to be self-sufficient on under utilized land. The January 1898 San Francisco Chronicle reported the Army’s premise as: “waste labor should be placed on waste land by the aid of waste capital. The uniting of this trinity of wastes would solve the great problem of labor.”

Infrastructure including a post office, schoolhouse, a general store, an assembly hall and an \$8,000 irrigation plant was built in late 1897; 75 residents moved into 32 homes in January. By July, they had 225 acres under cultivation in a variety of crops and were building a warehouse. Fort Romie was deemed a model project for planning others, but within a year it had failed. An attempt to revive it in the early 1900s also failed, and Fort Romie is relegated to the history books. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the first family of Pebble Beach made its mark in the development of Monterey County. 🌊



## The Beauty and Benefits of Native Plants: Two Local Organizations Making A Difference

by Gerald Verhasselt



Two local groups are making a big impact by encouraging use of native plants as a first choice in selection and planting of landscapes, gardens, and yards. Most native plants are drought tolerant and require little or no water. Many are fire and deer resistant while also attracting bees and birds. Native plants come in all shapes, shades, colors, sizes, and are much easier to grow and maintain. They have adapted to the local soil content, nutrients, and moisture/water content.

One local project, coordinated by the Del Monte Forest Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) composed of local foresters, naturalists and biologists, is the Fire-safe Garden located just south of the Pebble Beach Community Services District Fire Station building at Forest Lake and Lopez Roads. Planted in 2009, the California native plants on display have proven resistant to flames, making them excellent for fire-defensible landscaping. Residents may stop in anytime for a walk-through and obtain an informative pamphlet that provides photos and specific details such as sun/shade exposure and watering needs for dozens of plants. You can contact the Fire Protection and Planning Office at 831.375.9644 or e-mail [fpo@pbcasd.org](mailto:fpo@pbcasd.org).

The Return of the Natives Restoration Education Project (RON) is part of the education and outreach branch of the Watershed Institute of CSUMB. RON is a community based habitat restoration effort dedicated to "bringing people to nature and nature to people through hands-on participation restoring habitats." RON annually establishes over 30,000 native plants within Monterey County, comprised of 60-80 species to meet the needs of its public lands partners.

CSUMB staff and students currently focus RON resources on three nearby habitat areas:

- Native plant restoration of the degraded dunes of Ft. Ord State Park and the Marina Dunes for enjoyment by hikers, birdwatchers, sunset gazers and recreational bikers on lands once restricted to military target practice;
- Restoration of the old army roads and deeply gullied trails at the new Ft. Ord National Monument to provide a haven and sanctuary for rare and endangered plant and animal species;
- In the highly urbanized Creeks of Salinas, winter planting and year-round creek clean-up events introduce all to the restored creeks and parkways in their community. The results are green arteries throughout the city for walkers, birdwatchers, bikers and joggers to have a nearby place to explore.

Laura Lee Leink heads the Seaside CSUMB RON project and its programs. To learn more about the Watershed Institute and the RON Project, go to <http://ron.csUMB.edu>. There are various ways for you to support the efforts of RON on the Monterey Peninsula.



Photo from left to right: Laura Lee Leink, CSUMB; Gerald Verhasselt, current OSAC Chair; June Stock, former OSAC Chair



After more than 20 years of planning, Pebble Beach Company has started construction on the Del Monte Forest Plan. Last year, the Coastal Commission and Board of Supervisors both unanimously approved the plan, with the Coastal Commission calling it a “landmark” project due to its protection for local habitat as well as its visitor-serving and public access components.

A new Pebble Beach Driving Range and Golf Academy on Collins Field, and a new parking lot across from The Inn at Spanish Bay are the first components under construction. The parking lot will be completed in early August, and the driving range/golf academy in January 2014.

The Company is also dedicating conservation easements to the Del Monte Forest Conservancy over 635 acres of native habitat. When combined with lands previously preserved by the Company, this additional 635 acre dedication will ensure that 25 percent of the Del Monte Forest will be protected forever for future generations to enjoy.

The Del Monte Forest Plan also includes a number of traffic improvements as well as 90 new residential lots. One traffic project has already been completed – a new “T” intersection where Portola meets Stevenson. A second project is planned to start in November at the intersection of Congress and 17-Mile Drive at the entrance to The Inn, where a roundabout will be installed to facilitate safer traffic flow. The Company also will be completing 32 lots located on Poppy Hills Golf Course this year while the course is closed for renovation.

The other approved components of the plan include additional guest rooms and expanded meeting space at The Lodge and The Inn; improvements to the Highway 1/68/17 Mile Drive intersections outside the Highway 1 Gate; more parking at The Lodge; a new equestrian center; and a new 100-room hotel near Spyglass Hill Golf Course. These components will be completed in a number of phases over the next decade, and updates will be provided in the future as the timing is finalized. ■



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## 10th Annual "A Table Affair" Held In April



"A Table Affair" celebrated its 10th anniversary on Thursday, April 18th at the Conference Center, The Lodge at Pebble Beach.

The event, cosponsored by Pebble Beach Riding & Trails Association and Pebble Beach Company, was noteworthy for the enthusiastic support of all participants which included the table designers, the volunteers, the increased number of guests and several much admired service dogs. Thirty-six creative and imaginative table arrangements delighted the eye. The

presentations included "Midnight (dinner) at the Oasis", "Orange Crush", "Edwardian Elegance at Downton Abbey", "Knights of the Round Table" and "Out of Africa". A silent auction of themed gift baskets was a wonderful success.

Redwings Horse Sanctuary and the SPCA Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center, two deserving causes, benefited from the \$8,000 donated at "A Table Affair 2013".

Since its inception in 2004 "A Table Affair" has been instrumental in raising close to \$100,000 for local charities. Grateful thanks are due to all who have supported the event over the last ten years.

*Photos courtesy of Sandi Verbanec: Midnight (dinner) at the Oasis - Krissy Huston and Susan DeFloria; Edwardian Elegance at Downton Abbey - Kristiane Maas*



office@dmfpo.org <http://www.dmfpo.org> (831) 373-1618  
The Del Monte Forest Property Owners 2012 Compilation Audit is available upon request.

Look for a postcard in your mail in late summer with information on the next DMFPO hosted Sunday afternoon seminar.

3101 Forest Lake Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953

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