

Our Ocean Backyard — *Santa Cruz Sentinel* columns by Gary Griggs, Director, Institute of Marine Sciences, UC Santa Cruz.

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Coastal Place Names

A number of faithful readers responded when I asked about suggestions for future articles. After five years of columns I thought it would be interesting to hear what you wanted to know more about. While some of you requested topics I had covered in earlier columns (which are on-line on the Seymour Center web-site (<http://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu/about-us/news/our-ocean-backyard-archive/>) others had new ideas. I am trying to get to each of those, but as you probably realize, I often get side tracked by some current ocean or coastal issue.

One idea I found interesting was the source of many of our local coastal place names, simply because whether we are new to the area or old timers, there are lots of interesting names that few of us know origins for. Names or places like It's Beach, Black Point, and Hidden Beach, to name a few.

This column, and a few more to come, are in response to this suggestion. I am deeply indebted to a wonderful source of information on all things Santa Cruz: *Santa Cruz County Place Names* by the late Donald T. Clark. This author is the authority and this book is one to be trusted.

Don Clark was the founding UCSC librarian, and reportedly the first of founding Chancellor Dean McHenry's appointments, back a half a century ago now, in 1962. He was a historian in addition to being a librarian. In the Forward to the book, Sandy Lydon, a close friend and local historian, writes that Don Clark dismissed himself as a "trivia buff", but spent 25 years researching the origins and history of every conceivable place name in the region (2300 of them to be exact), and this is the Rosetta Stone for the county.

The book is out of print but copies can be found on-line, and while it is not exactly a novel, it makes for fascinating and illuminating reading. And when there is a disagreement among earlier references or historians (historians rarely agree on anything), Don Clark provides us with all the information and lets us make up our own mind.

Being sort of an organized person, I thought it made sense to proceed along the coast in one direction or another, rather than use a random approach. So I made the decision to traverse the coast from north to south, from Waddell Bluffs to the Pajaro River, the northern and southern boundaries of the county coastline.

Lets head north to Waddell Bluffs, Beach and Creek. Who was Waddell anyway? Well, William Waddell was originally from Kentucky and worked his way across the continent arriving in Santa Cruz County in 1851. At one time or another he built and operated four different lumber mills, with the last mill along the creek now named after him.

In 1861 he completed a sawmill, a five-mile long tramway using horse drawn cars to get the lumber to the coast, and a 700-foot long wharf, which extended out from the bluff a short ways north of where the Año Nuevo State Park Visitor Center is today. A small settlement, Waddell's Landing developed and the wharf lasted until storms destroyed it about 1880.

While hunting deer in 1875 he was attacked and severely mauled by a large Grizzly bear. William Waddell died of his injuries several days later at age 57.