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ABOVE CARMEL, MONTEREY AND BIG SUR



North toward Monterey Bay

(Opposite) South toward Big Sur







Opposite) Monterey Bay



ABOVE CARMEL, MONTEREY AND BIG SUR

by ROBERT CAMERON

A new collection of historical and original aerial photographs

with text by HAROLD GILLIAM

CAMERON and COMPANY, San Francisco, California

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Color processing by The New Lab, San Francisco Cameras by Pentax Typography by Minnowillo and What a Beautiful Setting, San Francisco Retouching by Jerome Vloeberghs and Alicemarie Mutrux Color Separations and Printing in South Korea This is the place where California began.

It began here geologically when the Coast Ranges rose out of the Pacific to form the western edge of North America.

It began here historically when the Spaniards chose Monterey Bay as the site for the capital of California, the westernmost outpost of the Spanish empire.

Visit this coast now and you can have a direct experience with both of these beginnings. See it from the air, as you will in Robert Cameron's pictures, and you will enjoy it with the broadest perspective of time and space.

You can see State Highway 1 clinging to the clifftops down the Big Sur shoreline, traversing the precipitous slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains, which seem to have just risen from the sea, the water still streaming down the western flanks in creeks and rivers, the white breakers exploding on the cliffs below.

The range is in fact still rising. The road in some places is laid on broad shelves planed off by the ocean when the range was lower and in other places cuts across the rising cliffs that are being continually reshaped by the waves coming in from the far Pacific.

You can imagine the amazement of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, the first European explorer to see this coast, when in 1542, sailing for Spain, he fought his way northward through storms that battered his two vessels. Through rifts in the low clouds he caught glimpses of this rising edge of the continent: "So great was the swell of the ocean that it was terrifying to see, and the coast was bold...mountains which seem to reach the heavens, and the sea beats on them. Sailing close to land, it ap-

pears as though they would fall on the ships.'

After such threatening terrain, Cabrillo was doubtless relieved to find shelter in Monterey Bay, which he called "Bahía de los Pinos" for the forests of pines on the coastal hills. The course of New World exploration was painfully slow, and it was more than two centuries before the emissaries of the Spanish empire were able to plant a colony on this shore and create California as a political entity.

This historic beginning, too, you can experience here — in Carmel's Mission San Carlos Borromeo, founded by Father Junipero Serra in 1770, and in the Presidio of Monterey, established at the same time by Gaspar de Portolá. Although Serra first erected a cross designating the site for the mission in Monterey, he soon decided to locate it over the hills by the Carmel River, for reasons you can see in Cameron's pictures. The fertile bottom lands of the river held greater promise for agriculture, and the stream itself afforded an ample supply of water. Serra may also have been motivated by a desire to put a suitable distance between his native neophytes, particularly the women, and the military garrison at the Presidio.

The good padre, who is buried in Carmel at his headquarters mission, has been nominated for sainthood for his incredible feat of organizing the chain of California missions, which converted to Christianity thousands of the native residents. But the nomination has caused dissent among those who find his work misguided. He attracted the Ohlones and members of other tribes into the mission, baptized them, and taught them weaving and farming. In the process, however, the native culture was wiped out, hundreds died of European diseases, and the survivors were unable to resume the ways of their ancestors when the missions crumbled into disuse a few decades after they were established.

However, the mission regime of the padres was benevolent compared to the later impact of the Yankees, who slaughtered the natives without compunction. The only present-day reminders of the original Ohlone society are the shell mounds along the coast and in the river valleys — the sole remnants of their villages and encampments, vestiges of a vanished culture

Fortunately, there are ample remains of Monterey's era as the provincial capital. At the edge of the harbor, near the foot of the Presidio where Portolá and Serra landed in 1770, you can see the Old Custom House built by the Spanish in 1814, the first public building on the Pacific Coast. It was here that Commodore Sloat raised the Stars and Stripes on July 7, 1846, bringing California into the Union. Nearby are several other buildings dating from Monterey's era as the state capital, including Colton Hall, where the California Constitutional Convention was held.

It is fitting that many of Cameron's pictures in this book were taken from above the ocean and show the relation between land and sea. The ocean dominated this region in many ways. One of them was noted by Robert Louis Stevenson when he lived here briefly in 1879:

The one common note of all this country is the haunting presence of the ocean. A great faint sound of breakers follows you high up into the inland canyons; the roar of waters dwells in the clean, empty rooms of Monterey as in a shell upon the chimney. The woods and the Pacific rule between them the climate of this seaboard region. On the streets of Monterey, when the air does not smell salt from the one, it will be blowing perfumed from the resinous tree-tops of the other.

After the Gold Rush, California's capital was moved from Monterey to Sacramento, closer to the scene of the action, but the removal of the capital did not turn the city into a ghost town. The Monterey Peninsula's potential as a tourist attraction was detected early by the "Big Four" builders of the Central Pacific Railroad (later Southern Pacific).

Leland Stanford, Collis P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins, and Charles Crocker. After completion of the transcontinental rail link in 1869. they extended their line to Monterey and built a resort hotel there. Although it burned down in a few years, it was replaced in 1887 by the palatial Victorian Hotel Del Monte, eulogized as "The Most Elegant Hotel in the World" and "The Queen of American Watering Holes."

"Hotel Del Monte" literally means "hotel of the grove," an appropriate name in view of the surrounding pine and oak woodland. (The Del Monte brand of canned foods originated with coffee especially

prepared for the affluent guests of the hotel.)

You will see here an aerial view of that wooden palace alongside a Cameron picture of the building that replaced it after it burned to the ground in 1924. The new hotel, under the guidance of S.F.B. Morse (grandnephew of the inventor of the telegraph) was fittingly designed in Spanish or early California style.

In addition to the original hotel and its spacious grounds, the developers laid out the Seventeen-Mile Drive, where hotel guests in elegant carriages (and the general public for a fee) were able to skirt the perimeter of the peninsula, enjoy its spectacular ocean views, visit the Carmel Mission (then in ruins, since restored) and return through

the Del Monte Forest to the hotel.

It was along this drive at Pescadero Point shortly before the turn of the century that Frank Devendorf, a San Jose realtor who had been vacationing at the Methodist retreat in Pacific Grove, gazed across Carmel Bay to the white sand beach and the forest on the shore and envisioned a village in the pines. The community that he later founded became known as Carmel-by-the-Sea. It attracted artists, poets, bohemians, and professors from both Stanford and the University of California. In a hillside house amid the pines, poet George Sterling entertained Jack London, Mary Austin, Sinclair Lewis, and other literary notables.

One of the most illustrious writers attracted here was Robinson Jeffers, who arrived in 1914, then unknown, and a few years later built his stone Tor House and its tower on Carmel Point. He immortalized this shoreline and the Big Sur coast in the poetry he wrote here over four decades, work that despite his pessimistic nature glowed with the

splendor of the sea and the continent's edge.

While Devendorf was developing Carmel (and later Carmel Highlands to the south), S.F.B. Morse was building the gated community known alternately as Del Monte Forest and Pebble Beach. Wisely, Morse provided not only for luxury homes but for ample open space (a plan not always followed by his successors), including some of the world's most renowned golf courses. Names like "Pebble Beach," "Cypress Point," and "Spyglass Hill" fire the imagination of many a golfer. The dazzling seaside scenery and celebrity-studded tournaments, including movie stars and former presidents, have made the courses familiar to television viewers throughout the world. Robert Cameron, himself an avid golfer, provides in these pages a bird's-eye view of the rounds made

by sportsmen in pursuit of the white ball.

Cameron always takes his pictures leaning out the window of a small plane or the door of a helicopter to achieve the sharpest focus and the broadest panorama — as he has done with his dozen previous "Above..." books, from San Francisco to London and Paris. In Paris he was asked to mount an exhibition of his photographs and was awarded La Medaille de Vermeil by the mayor. In 1994 he was shown in action on Charles Kurault's "Sunday Morning" show on CBS. Although he is an octegenarian, he has ambitious plans for future "Above..." books.

If Cameron were to produce a new version of this book in, say, the year 2020, we may wonder how the scene would have changed. Will the beauty of this coast be preserved for future generations or will it be overrun, as have many other parts of California, by wave after wave of population, new buildings, new highways, parking facilities and ur-

ban development?

Thus far this region has been notably successful in resisting the homogenizing forces of commercialism. Monterey, in alliance with the state of California, has retained tangible evidence of its historic past. giving visitors a glimpse into history. Carmel was probably the first community anywhere to oppose excessive development, beginning in the 1920s, and to defend its distinctive identity in the face of tremendous commercial pressures. The Big Sur coast has been the locale of many hard-fought battles against developers who would have urbanized that shoreline and highway builders who would have extended a four-lane freeway through its entire length.

Some residents fear that the current Big Sur land-use plan, developed under the mandate of the California Coastal Commission, would permit too much building. It allows the construction of more than one thousand additional units of housing and resorts. Clearly that amount of development would drastically affect the character of this wild shore. The future of Big Sur and the entire coastline will depend on the vigilance of residents of the region and other Californians in devising innovative mean's to resist overdevelopment. One of the most encouraging prospects has been the work of a private organization funded by contributions, the Big Sur Land Trust, which is buying vacant coastal property piece

by piece to keep it as nature made it.

As we contemplate the beginnings of California on this shore, we can be grateful to those residents who have devoted immeasurable amounts of time, energy, and money to preserving the identity and integrity of this incomparable coastline.

May their tribe increase.

- H.G.

CARMEL



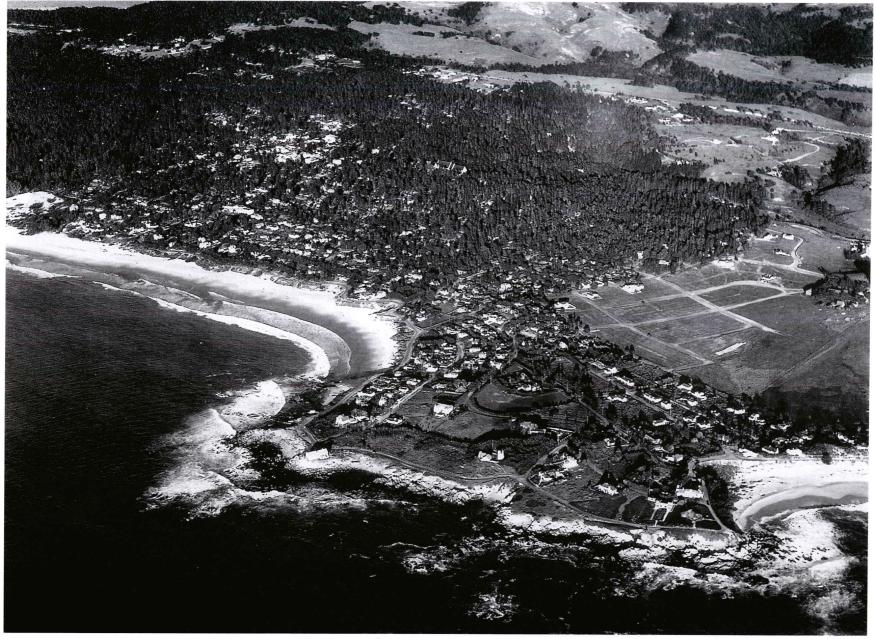
Carmel, the village in the forest, is a unique mix of pines and cypresses, dazzling white dunes, venerable cottages, and million-dollar beachfront mansions. Ocean Avenue, in the center of the picture, is the town's main street.



Carmel River State Beach, immediately south of the town, includes the biologically rich wetlands near the river's mouth. Upstream water users diminish the flow so much that the river often sinks into the sand before reaching the ocean. For generations it was the custom of Carmel residents to turn out with their shovels after the first autumn rains to open the channel through the beach and allow salmon to migrate upstream.

(Opposite) Carmel and environs from the east. At the top is Pescadero Point, where Frank Devendorf first visualized the possibility of a village in the pines nearly 100 years ago. The town, officially known as Carmel-by-the-Sea, consists of one square mile in the center of the picture. At the upper right is the community of Pebble Beach.





Despite its anti-growth reputation, Carmel has expanded greatly in recent decades, as vividly illustrated in these pictures of Carmel Point in 1938 and 1993. In the contemporary picture, the green-roofed house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is visible at the left end of the point. To the right is the mouth of the Carmel River.

