

# Ed Fletcher and Palomar Mountain

Peter Brueggeman, version 2, 21 January 2022



**Ed Fletcher, c1900**

Beginning his San Diego career as a produce merchant, Ed Fletcher branched out into water and land development. Born in 1872, Fletcher worked as a young man for the produce firm of Nason and Smith in San Diego. After a year of employment, an eighteen year old Fletcher started business trips into the San Diego back country on a motor bike, buying produce, grain, eggs, chickens, etc, and selling flour, sugar, canned goods, etc. One time, he went up the east side of Palomar Mountain on his motor bicycle, purchasing the Cook Brother's (George and Hiram) apple crop, and then carrying his bicycle on his shoulder, went down the trail to the La Jolla Indian reservation, and on to Escondido.



**Frank Salmons, c1910**

In August 1903, Fletcher was visiting Frank Salmons, the groceryman at Pala, living in the Mission building where the store was located. During quail hunting on the Pauma Ranch land grant of 13,000 acres owned by the Catholic Church, Fletcher saw Pauma Creek flowing, asking Salmons about its source. Salmons answered that it came from springs from Doane Valley on Palomar Mountain, and was the usual flow at that time of year. Fletcher realized possibilities of water development for power and irrigation, because he had been in contact with farming and irrigation in San Diego County in his business. Fletcher and Salmons got an option on the Pauma Ranch for six months for \$75,000. Fletcher sought either a

purchaser of the Pauma Ranch at a profit, or someone who would give them a working interest in its development for the option.

Fletcher realized the need to construct a dam somewhere on Palomar Mountain for storage of flood water in winter to be using on Pauma Ranch during the irrigating season. Salmons and Fletcher climbed Palomar Mountain with a team of horses and identified a natural damsite in lower Doane Valley on property owned by Robert H. Asher. Fletcher called on various prominent San Diegans, and they weren't interested in financing his proposition. Fletcher unsuccessfully sought an interview three times with Henry Edwards Huntington of Los Angeles, a railroad magnate and owner of various power companies. Fletcher then sought an interview with his nephew, Howard E. Huntington, who directed him to William G. Kerckhoff, president of Huntington's Pacific Light and Power Company. Fletcher's pitch to Kerckhoff urged that an engineer be sent to investigate, Fletcher would meet him in Oceanside and show him around, with Fletcher reimbursing their expenses if things were not as Fletcher represented.



**Eugene C. Batchelder, c1905**

Fletcher met the engineer William Schuyler Post, and, with Fletcher's brother-in-law E.C. Batchelder, they embarked on a trip to examine Pauma Ranch. Following that they went by team of horses up the fourteen mile west grade to Palomar Mountain, taking six hours. They inspected Doane Valley, and stayed a night at Bailey's, whom Fletcher reports as "splendid people." With surveying instruments, Post cross-sectioned the damsite, producing a plane table survey of the reservoir site to determine capacity. Post instructed Fletcher to file "on the waters of Pauma Creek, at a point a mile and a half west of the Doane Ranch, on government land, for the purpose of developing water for power, irrigation and domestic purposes. This filing was made September 11, 1903, in Book 3, Page 400 of Water Claims."

After eating lunch, Post took a nap, and a gust of wind blew his portfolio papers about. Fletcher picked them up and put them away before Post awoke, but he noticed a map of Warner Ranch and the San Luis Rey Valley below, with a red-marked

section of government land a mile below the current location of Henshaw Dam. Fletcher deduced that the Pacific Light and Power Company had additional interests than simply Pauma Ranch and Doane Valley. Post finished up his surveying with Fletcher and Batchelder, telling them to go on home, since he had other matters to investigate in the section, and he would make his own arrangements to get to Oceanside, in order to return to Los Angeles. Fletcher saw

through the ruse and was curious about their interest, protesting that he would not desert Post, and was in no hurry to go home. Fletcher wanted to find out more, and Post accepted Fletcher's offer to continue the trip with him.

The next day, Post and Fletcher rode horses down the trail to the La Jolla Indian Reservation. Batchelder had left separately, taking along a young man to bring their horses back to Palomar Mountain, planning to meet up with Post and Fletcher at the current location of Henshaw Dam. Fletcher says "the climb down the mountain was tough on us both and there was no trail up the San Luis Rey Valley, which meant breaking brush, crossing canyons and crawling on our hands and knees at times." Post and Fletcher were delayed but finally reached the red-marked section of government land, on which Post made a water filing. At 9:30pm they made it to Batchelder at Warner Ranch with nothing to eat, and a cold night on the ground under wet saddle blankets. Fletcher reports "It was the coldest night I ever experienced." They went on to San Diego, and separated. Fletcher received a letter two weeks later stating that the Pacific Light and Power Company wasn't interested in his Pauma-Doane Valley project. A few days later, Fletcher learned from Post that Post had made a recommendation to purchase Pauma Ranch and Doane Valley damsite, and wasn't aware of the rejection. Fletcher went on to involvement with various San Luis Rey Valley projects.

## Section 2

Pages 7 to 10

# The San Diego Union

AND DAILY BEE

SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY MORNING NOVEMBER 2, 1905.

## Section 2

Pages 7 to 10

### TO UTILIZE THE POWER OF THE SAN LUIS REY ED. FLETCHER AND FRANK A. SALMONS HAVE KEPT ALIVE FILINGS ON 45,000 MINERS INCHES OF WATER SINCE LAST MARCH

Water to be Used for Generation of Electric Power at a Point Where  
it is Possible to Get a Drop of More Than Two Thousand Feet  
—Huntington's Interest in Deal Subject of Gossip

The water power of the San Luis Rey and of the Pauma creek has been controlled by the Fletcher-Salmons investment company, or by Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Salmons individually, but who it has been reported for, the known principals will not say, and not without some pressure will they acknowledge that the water filings which have appeared at regular intervals of a little less than sixty days each have been placed on record in their interest. To those who know the San Luis Rey

the amount of water appropriated.

The Place of Use. In each of the notices appropriating this amount of water it is stated that the place to which it is to be diverted and used is in section 34, township 18 south, range 1 west. This would mean that the water would be carried several miles—first on a straight line—in the pipes, tunnels and conduits referred to along and around the side of the mountain to this point at which it is to be used. Those who know this portion of the San Luis Rey country

author, and the water is to be used several miles west of the location of the notice, possibly at the same place mentioned in the other notices. In each case the water to be used for the developing of power to be used in the generation of electricity for mechanical purposes, and it is to be diverted by means of dams, tunnels, pipes and conduits sufficient to carry the amount of water referred to in the notices. The Purpose of It. While neither of the known principals

and able man, has \$7000 a year, Eliot of Harvard, the dean of the college presidents of the country, receives \$10,000. John C. McCall the undistinguished son of the president of the New York Life, was drawing more than twice as much a short time after leaving college. The church pays its leading men no better than the state. A recent congressional year book gave no instance of a preacher's salary above \$2000 though there are said to be three such cases in the denomination. An Episcopalian bishop may receive from \$2000 to \$12,500. The intellectual men, the men of the best education, those who are superiorly developed capacity those who are most important to society work for small pay as compared with the self-selected masters of modern finance.—New York World.

#### BIRTHDAY RECEPTION FOR DIRECTOR FIRNIE

The Woodmen of the World band gave a reception in Armory hall last night in honor of the birthday of its director, D. W. Pirnie. There was a large turnout of the bandmen and their friends and a pleasant time was had. C. O. Mundell made the opening speech and presented to Mr. Pirnie on behalf of the band a silver mounted ebony haton. Mr. Pirnie responded with warm thanks to the members. A concert followed, lasting until 10:30. Pirnie's concert band was present and aided in the program with some of the most recent compositions. At the hour turned all hands adjourned to the banquet room where light refreshments were served. Afterwards dancing was enjoyed in the main hall. The committee which arranged the affair consisted of William Woolquist, H. Woolquist, H. Sejoll, A. Lambda was floor manager.

The Marston Store Closes Daily at 5:30 p. m., Excepting on Saturday—9 p. m.

## The Marston Store

Established 1878.

Dry Goods, Wearing Apparel and Carpets

November 1, 1905

### Patent Leather Hats

All Reduced

ON THURSDAY, November 2, we place on sale all our patent leather hats at special prices. Reason: We have too many. Some were sent us that we hadn't ordered,—from Gage Brothers Co., who said we ought to have them because patent leather hats were so popular in the east. But it makes too large a stock, and we'll mark the prices down so low that—Presto! Will you be in time?

Patent leather caps for automobiles, etc. were \$1.25, now ..... **75c**

Patent leather sailors, were \$1.75, now ..... **\$1**

Patent leather sailors with silk under brim, were \$3.50, now ..... **\$2.50**

Young girls' tricorn hats of patent leather and colored velvet, were \$2.50, now ..... **\$1.75**

Janney Polo street hats with neat trimming, were \$2.50, now ..... **\$1.75**

Others were \$4.50, now \$3.50



Raincoats at



Tweed Coats

Ed Fletcher writes of taking San Diego backcountry trips with his 1906 two cylinder Maxwell, including Palomar Mountain with George W. Marston, G. Aubrey Davidson, M.T. Gilmore and William B. Gross.



**Ed Fletcher in his two cylinder Maxwell**

Ed Fletcher photo, published in Catherine Wood's "Palomar from Teepee to Telescope" book

Catherine Wood in her book "Palomar from Teepee to Telescope" [San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1937] said that Fletcher had to back up the steep Palomar road pitches in order that the engine might receive enough gas. Fletcher writes "With a 30% grade down the east side we had to hitch a pine tree behind dragging as a brake for several miles. ... Why we were not all killed those days I don't know, traveling in those first cars, but the Lord was with us and they were happy days."

The Ed Fletcher Papers at the UCSD Library (MSS 81, box 24, folder 14), in a 'San Diego Union' folder, have typescript pages on an Ed Fletcher trip to the Hotel Palomar, the text of which is below. A shortened version was published in the San Diego Union on 12 July 1908, page 16.

## **Members of San Diego Automobile Party Assembled at Summit of Palomar Mountain on Two Hundred Mile Trip**



San Diego, Cal. July 11, 1908

A delightful automobile trip, covering a distance of nearly two hundred miles has just been completed by a party of prominent San Diegans including Mr. and Mrs. C. Aubrey Davidson, Dr. and Mrs. C.J. Kendall, Miss Kate Sessions, Mr. George Cook, Dr. Adolph Kramer, Colonel and Mrs. Ed Fletcher, Mrs. F. T. Nason, Mrs. J. Carlisle, Mr. and Mrs. Carlisle, Mr. A. C. Riorden, Miss Riorden, Dr. and Mrs. H.C. Oatman and Harold E. Marshall, who left the city the early part of the week in five automobiles.

The destination was Palomar Mountain and the trip from San Diego included a visit to Escondido, Valley Center, San Luis Rey Valley and Palomar Mountain. Leaving San Diego at 9:30 Monday morning the party spent a

few moments at Escondido and then continued on to the foot of Palomar Mountain, where on the bank of the San Luis Rey River, under beautiful oak trees, a delightful lunch was served.

After a rest of an hour and a half, the entire party climbed the grade to Hotel Palomar, at Azalea Park, arriving there at about 7:00 P.M. The climb up the grade will long be remembered by the entire party. The timber line was reached at about sunset and one and all felt that the magnificent panorama secured at that time, alone repaid one for the trip.

After a delightful dinner at the hotel, served by Mrs. Penny, it was certainly a change from San Diego conditions to be able to wander around by moonlight through the heavy timber, a mile above the sea or gaze westward from the promontory and see the search-lights of the cruisers off San Diego. The atmospheric conditions were perfect on Tuesday and one could sit on the porch of the hotel and see the entire country from the Table Mountains of Mexico to the San Clemente and Catalina Islands, as well as the intervening valleys and coast line.

Numerous trails have been made by the Fletcher-Salmons Investment Company through Azalea Park and all the party enjoyed a tramp down Tiger Lily Creek through the timber and among the acres of Azaleas. It was a rare treat to the ladies to be able to pick wild strawberries, wild roses and tiger lilies.

There were three, Mr. George Cook, Miss Kate Sessions and Dr. Adolph Kramer who absented themselves from the party most of the time while on Palomar. This is easily explained owing to the fact that they are noted for their interest in botany and horticulture and as lovers of nature, have done much to beautify San Diego. About noon, they appeared at the hotel, each with a collection of interesting specimens of flowers and shrubs from the woods, while Miss Sessions had a sack of leaf-mold on her back. One incident happened while on Palomar that caused considerable worry and excitement. Mr. G. Aubrey Davidson, our genial President of the Southern Trust & Savings Bank, while wandering through the woods, lost his way and a searching party with considerable difficulty located him in a dense clump of fir trees a mile from the hotel, picking and consuming wild straw-berries and thimble-berries.

The entire party took an automobile to the East end of the mountain. This was the most beautiful ride on the trip as a gorgeous view of practically the entire San Diego County was secured at different points, while ever now and then the road leads through the most beautiful section of heavy timber that Palomar can boast of.

Late Tuesday afternoon, Miss Kate Sessions, Messrs. George Cook. H.E. Marshall and Colonel Ed Fletcher made the run to Julian, coming down the next day, via Eagle Peak road to San Diego, while the rest of the party came back via the San Luis Rey Valley and the coast. One and all agreed that Palomar mountain furnishes a resort in Summer that is unexcelled in any section of Southern California.



**Ed Fletcher and group en route up Palomar Mountain, c1920**



**Myron T. Gilmore, George W. Marston, & Ed Fletcher, on Palomar, August 15, 1930**

Myron T. Gilmore was President of the San Diego Trust and Savings Bank. George W. Marston owned the Marston department store.

Unless otherwise indicated, the source is: **Memoirs of Ed Fletcher.** Colonel Ed Fletcher. San Diego: Pioneer Printers, 1952.