

# Pedley Valley and Darby's Palomar Mountain Resort

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April 02, 2005

My dad and my mom (Charles and Jean Darby) bought the upper 40 acres of Pedley Valley in the early 1950's. I was about 6 years old then. The property was a deep valley with a stream running through it. I remember meeting Mr. Pedley and his wife only once. They drove down from the L.A. area to visit my parents in La Jolla. My dad loved the property and wanted to build a small resort there. My parents built a small lake there and four cabins. The property was called, "Darby's Palomar Mountain Resort." I think he really bought it for himself and not for a money making adventure.

I remember the very first time I went up there. We camped alongside the creek where my father pitched a tent. He didn't know at the time that he had pitched the tent on a deer path, and all night the deer passed by the tent. I remember some of them stepping on the outer edge of the canvas tent. Needless to say no one got a lot of sleep. The name of the creek was Iron Springs Creek. I am sure it got its name from the high iron content in the water as the taste of it was pretty strong, and my brother and I used to play in it a lot. The area that I am talking about is just below the now existing dam. This is where he built our first well.

When he bought the property there were no buildings on it and the lake wasn't there and there was no road. I think at first we used the water company road to get to the property. There was a pump house (?) at the end of the road just on the other side of our property line. There was no electricity on the mountain at that time, and everything was run by generators (Observatory).

The first thing my dad did was to build the cabin "Moonwinks," and I think it was built over one summer. This is a picture of our cabin "Moonwinks."



The sign that my dad made on our cabin is still there "Moonwinks", and the others were "Winky", "Twig" and "Dogwood". The last one burnt down shortly after my dad sold the property, and another cabin was built near the same spot by the new owners. The blue trim on the "Moonwinks" windows is the original color of the paint and the door used to be the same color.

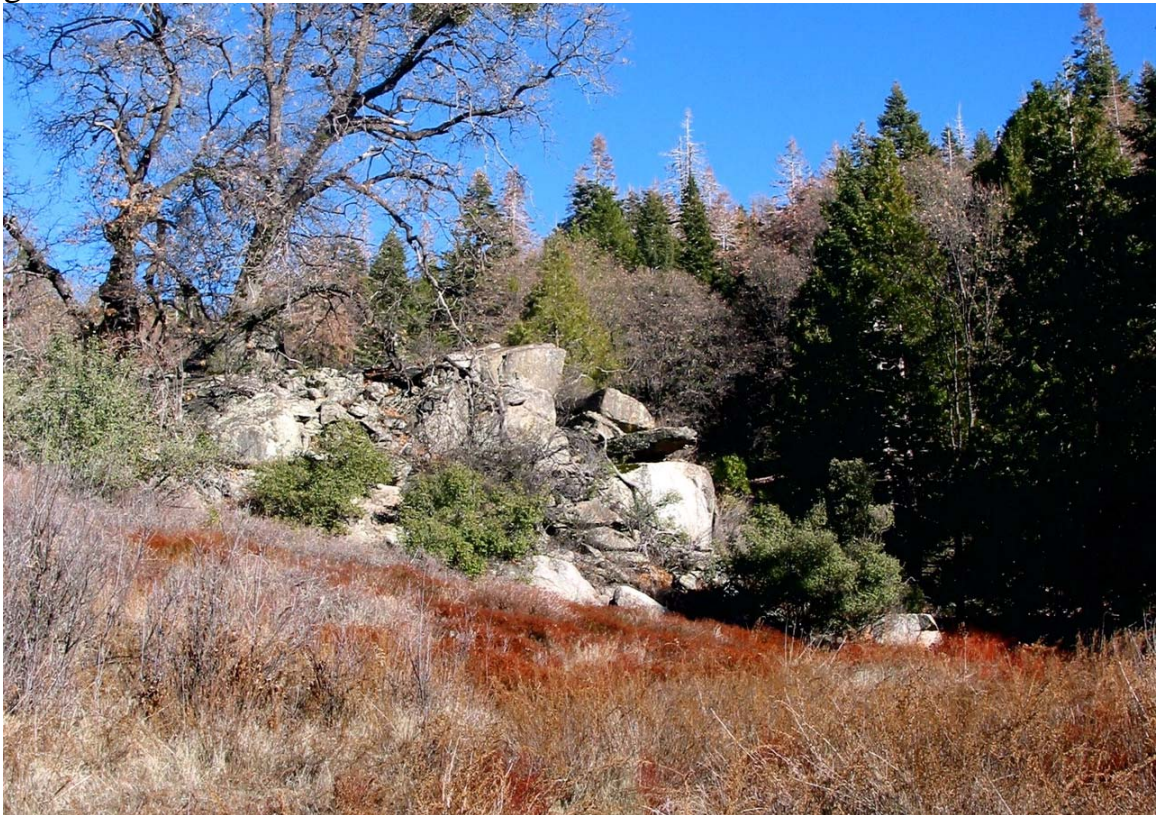
"Moonwinks" looks pretty much the same except for the log railings on the porches. I took this picture a couple of years ago in the winter.

He used a hand saw as there was no power to run electric saws. The lumber came from Solana Beach Lumber, and was special milled half logs to look like logs on the outside and smooth flat on the inside. The rocks for the fireplace were gathered by my brother (Marty) and I, and the water for the cement was carried by bucket from the creek. The windows came from a old house in La Jolla that was torn down and they had the old rippled glass panes in some of them. The stairs to the loft (my brother's room) was built of logs that we gathered and the railings on the porch were of logs. My dad put in a bathroom even though there was no power for the hot water heater or to run pumps as he thought eventually there would be power on the mountain. We had an outhouse along a path that seemed to me to be at least a mile away. Especially at night and when there was snow on the ground.

The road was built around the same time as the lake was built about a year or two after the cabin. We have old 8mm movies of it being built. The man who built it was from Escondido. I remember the couple stayed in our cabin for the summer while it was being built. The lake took up about 5 acres and during the time that we owned the property it was only full once with water over the spillway. Usually it was about 2/3 full. My brother and I had our own rowboats that my dad built for us, and they were white on the outside and mine was pink on the inside and my brother's blue. The lake was stocked with bass and bluegill. Every year we would go during trout season over to Doane Pond and catch fish. One year my dad brought the fish back alive to our lake and put them in. The trout survived and grew to a very large size. If you were lucky enough to catch one, that was a big day! I got up one morning before anyone else was up and snuck out of the cabin and took my fishing pole over to where the creek ran into the lake. I threw in my line and thought I had snagged it on a log. I pulled and pulled and thought I would break the line. Then all of a sudden the fish started running with it and he jumped really high out of the water. I was so excited and my heart was pounding. I landed fish, threw down the rod and ran back to our cabin with this huge trout in my hands yelling all the way, " I caught Old Mossback!" My dad ran out on the porch to see what I was yelling about. It was a very exciting day. I didn't realize at the time that there were several Old Mossbacks in the lake.

My brother and I spent lots of time playing at the lake, swimming, fishing and rowing our boats. With the boats we had races to see who could row to the other side of the lake the fastest. We had splash fights in the summer where we would put the boats end to end and then use the oars to splash each other; we would also turn the boats upside down in the water and try to walk on the bottom of them. The first one to sink into the water lost. It was lots of fun! Just above where the creek runs into the lake was what we called the Willow Patch. It had a little waterfall and was all green and mossy like a fairy land. There we used to make forts out of the willows with sides and roofs, and we tied the willow sticks together with willow bark. I lived on one side of the creek and my brother lived on the other side. We made bows and arrows from the willow, and played like we were Indians.

Just above this area is what we called Indian Rock. It is a great pile of granite rock, and it has old Indian mortars in it from where the Indians ground their food.



We used to play a lot up there grinding choke cherries and acorns. One of the larger rocks forms a ledge and we would crawl under it and watch for the "enemy " below. There is a plant that grows at the bottom of the rock pile, and in the fall it turns a bright orange/red and I would gather that for our

Thanksgiving table. Behind Indian Rock is a patch of Skunk Cabbage and when it was full grown and high in the summer, the deer used to sleep there at night. During the day my brother and I would play in it. We also used its wide leaves for plates to serve our tasty meals that we had ground in the rock mortars.

Just below the dam on the east hill was a large oak grove and a deer path led to it and ran through it. I thought it was the most beautiful place on earth. The oak trees formed a thick canopy and the sun would filter through in rays. There were some old tree stumps there, and I used to take my dolls there and pretend that the logs were castles. It was my own place to play. I usually took our black Belgium Sheep dog with me, but after a while he would leave and go back to the lake. One day as I was playing I heard voices and so I hid in the tree stumps. It was a group of hunters, and I was so scared! I just lay there quietly until they passed by, then I ran as fast as I could back to the cabin. I don't think I ever went back to play there again.

We used to go on hikes down to the lower Pedley Valley. There was an old apple orchard there, and Mr. Pedley told us that we could help ourselves. So each year at apple season we would go and pick a bag of apples. They were wonderful apples! They were green, small and very crisp with just enough sugar content to make them a little tart. There was also an old abandoned cabin there that Mr. Pedley and his wife and children had lived in at one time. It was fun to explore inside the different rooms. It was very old and falling apart, and as children we were very intrigued by it. I think that they had a saw mill there at one time; it seems to me that I remember someone saying that.