

California Travel Cults?

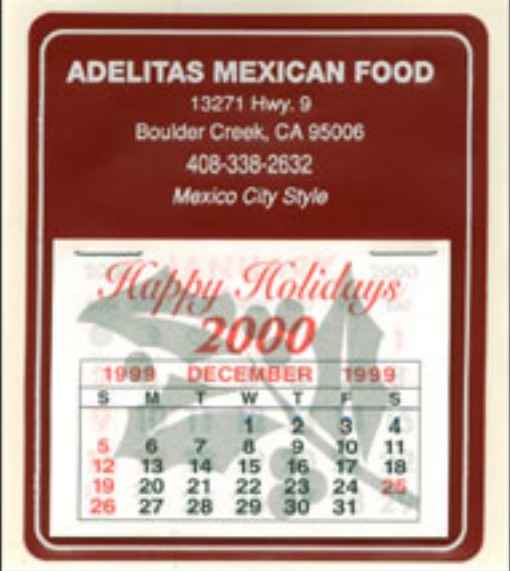
Submitted by an anonymous reader

Recently I found myself in the northern California town of San Jose on business. Looking at the map I realized that I was only minutes away from the infamous Santa Cruz mountain region. On a lark I decided to drive my rental car up and see if I could scout any of the infamous travel cult sites. If you remember from [the Incunabula catalog](#), page 67 in *Ong's Hat: The Beginning*, it is stated that Nick Herbert

came into contact with a California Travel Cult while writing *Faster than Light*. In [Advances in Skin Science](#) (pg. 109) and in a later [video document](#), a Travel Cult is said to reside near Boulder Creek, California, which is in the center of a large wilderness area known as Big Basin.

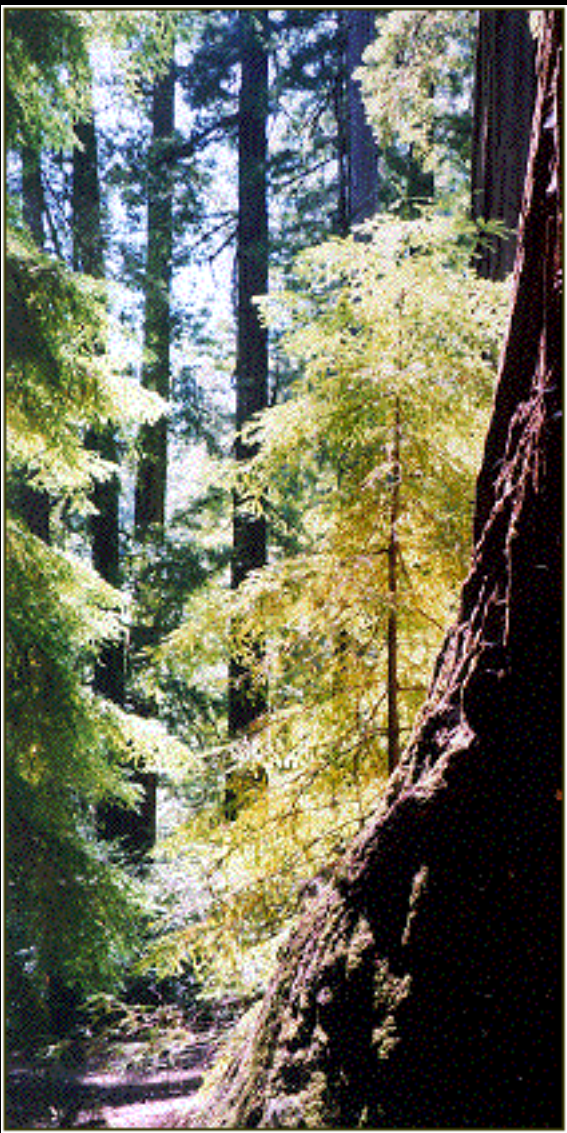
Taking highway 9 out of Los Gatos I ventured into this wilderness area and eventually came across the town of Boulder Creek. The first thing I saw upon arriving in the city limits was none other than Adelita's Mexican Cantina, the place that is noted as the spot of both interviews.

Pulling over I intended to take a picture but noticed that my disposable camera only had 11 pictures left on the roll so I decided to wait and see if anything better presented itself. If not I planned to snap a picture of Adelita's on the way back out. Before you ask, I did check around the town to see if I could buy another disposable camera somewhere but it was Sunday and they seemed to have rolled the sidewalks up. I guess that's the perils of a small mountain town. I asked around at the diner and a person or two actually knew Nick but didn't know where he lived or at least they weren't telling me.



I decided to drive around and do a little adventuring on my own. A little further up the road, I came across the [Brookdale Lodge](#). I stopped to grab a bite to eat. [As it turns out, the brochure that I found inside said that this place was a famous haunted building!](#) I can also say that the food is delicious and the atmosphere most unusual. The restaurant has a river running right through the center of the dining room!

The best part of this seeming random stop was the people I met in the bar. They all looked like grizzled old gold prospectors and were obviously longtime residents of the area. I asked a few if they had ever heard of the Travel Cults and two old coots answered that they did. It cost me several rounds of drinks to get the story out of them and the most they could tell me was a vague rumor of people who could disappear at will and of course the admonishment that they were "spooky." I asked if they could direct me to the commune and was given directions to follow a small, single lane road up the side of a mountain, which I was told would turn into a dirt road and then a "tire rut path." "It's up there past the end of that path, but it's abandoned." One of the Grizzly Adams stand-ins told me. Armed with my crude napkin map, I set off to climb a mountain in my rented Ford Taurus. Stupid I know, but I may never get back here so I had to give it a shot. As I wound around and around the mountain on a road barely wide enough to accommodate one car, much less two, I prayed to whatever deity held rank in this region to let me avoid any vehicles coming downhill in my direction. I could not get the mental picture of a logging truck or a Jeep piloted by a drugged out drunken hippy mountain rat plowing into me a full downhill speed after careening around one of the endless blind curves that I was negotiating. Several times I felt the tires spin as I slowly pulled up what seemed to be 90-degree angle hills and just as I was about to give up and start looking for a place to turn around (another problem) I noticed the road becoming ruts. Heartened by this obvious sign of progress I pushed the whining little Taurus on. After bumping bottom across a field of drying wildflowers, I came at long last to the end of the trail. I parked, got out and scanned the tree line in front of me. Damn! Those were some of the biggest trees I have ever seen! Giant Redwoods. I had heard of them and even seen some all the way from Los Gatos into Boulder Creek but these were huge! I could not see much in the gloom that the large trees afforded so I set off into the tree line to see what I could find. The tree line hid a ridge (damn these were BIG trees!) I began to climb the ridge and that's when I saw it.



Click on the thumbnails below to enlarge the images



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A small grouping of shacks, with a observation platform built in a tree nearby.



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The other thing I discovered was a box that contained 5 counter keys for a copy machine. The numbers were all in the tens of thousands. I can only imagine these were used make “free” copies at copy shops. Interesting...



It was getting dark, so I pocketed one of the copy keys and the pile of photos and climbed back down to the car. Unfortunately I had to return home the next morning but now that I’ve found this place I plan on going back with a better camera and some witnesses. Is this a remnant of the California travel cult? I don’t know but it bears more investigation, that much is for sure.

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Of particular interest were two items. As you can see, these are the two that I tried to get close ups on and the lens of my disposable camera was not up to the task but I think you can still make out what they are.

The first item was a pile of old Polaroid photographs that had become glued together from moisture. The one on top was faded and peeled and all I can tell you is it looked very, very, strange. I could vaguely make out some shapes of people involved in some kind of activity that looked like they were loading something into a large container, the size of a upright (stood on end) compact auto. I kept this pile of photos and will be sending them to Darkplanet to see if they can figure out a way to enhance them or separate them without damaging them.



The books ranged from “DIY” living subjects, self defense, Transcendental Meditation, fringe science, physics and I-Ching.



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There were obvious signs that electricity had once run into the shacks although the compound is so far out I can only imagine that they used generators which are now long gone.



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Inside the dingy shacks were piles of moldy books, broken furniture, and years worth of bird guano.



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The buildings had been cobbled together from tree limbs that been hacked from the mighty redwoods and various plywood and corrugated tin pieces. All in all they looked a lot like something Timothy McVeigh might have built during his career as a John Zerzan wannabe.



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I stopped and listened, to see if I heard any evidence of residents. All I needed was to spook some Unabomber types living off in the woods where my body undoubtedly would never be found. I laid low in the leaves and underbrush for a while until I was quite sure that no one was home. Climbing up the hill I realized that the compound had been abandoned some time ago.

