

**Gorda** This small settlement —if one can call a grocery store, gas station, and a few houses a settlement — is located near the coast S of Cape San Martin and between Spruce Creek and Willow Creek in Sec.5 T24S R5E. It hasn't always been there. Some maps show Gorda located N of Cape Martin just below Pacific Valley and near Plaskett Creek in Sec.19 T23S R5E. At least this was where the Gorda Post Office was once located. Gorda was in the national news in 1979 when Kidco Limited Ventures, a corporation consisting of four children of a San Diego family, all between the ages of 11 and 16, bought the entire town from moneys allegedly earned by raising earthworms, selling horse manure, and killing gophers! They failed to meet their mortgage payments, so, as Knox said, "this lively little ghost town is for sale again." Speaking of the terms Gordo and Gorda, Gudde wrote:

The Spanish word for "big" or "fat" is used in a geographical sense for massive promontories along the coast, usually with Punta [as in Punta Gorda]...The settlement, mine, and school preserve the old name of the near-by cape, Punta Gorda, which the Coast Survey changed to Cape San Martin in 1862.

But many story tellers prefer more romantic explanations for names, so, for what it might be worth we add this tale:

Gorda is the Spanish for "fat lady." In the sea just off the coast from Gorda rises a mighty rock. Its contours are feminine and were pleasing to the eye of early Spanish travelers and so the rock became Fat Lady, to be known as Gorda. — *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*.

White calls it "Gorda Station," saying "the 'Station' part goes back to the times when it was an important stop-over and post station for early travelers."

**Ref:** *King City Rustler*, May 25, 1901; Hill 1922:323-324; White 1954:41; Gudde 1969:124; Wobber 1975:16; *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, October 23, 1977; *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, April 25, and June 5, 1979; *Salinas Californian*, May 24, June 5, and July 23, 1979; Magary 1983:177-178; Adams 1985:127; Lussier 1985:38; Knox 1989:110; p.c. JN September 7, 1989

**Map:** [north of Cape San Martin]: 1901CEN, Souvenir 1902, 1903CAL, 1904SCA, 1907WEB, 1908CRA, 1910REC, 1913DEN, 1915SPC, 1919COZ, 1920HIG, 1925MON, 1926CRC, 1936CSA, 1953SPR as **Gorda**; 1908USF as **Goldo** [sic]; [south of Cape San Martin]: 1907GLO, 1949CAP, 1951CAL, 1964PCR, 1966LOS, 1970SPO, 1976COV, 1980CAM, 1983LOS, 1984COM, Adams 1985:126, Lussier 1985:32, 1987VEN, 1988OFF, 1990COM as **Gorda**; 1910REC, 1951CAL, 1953LOS show **Gorda Mine** south of Cape San Martin

**Gorda Mountain** This is *not* a mountain; it is a small settlement located on a hill on the E side of Highway 1 in SH of Sec.14 T24S R5E and just S of Gorda from which it takes its name.

The property was given to Madge Boyd, Marion Davies' hairdresser, by William Randolph Hearst. She and her son, Pat, disposed of it, and there are now several homes there. — Norman.

In 1977, *The Modern Utopian*, a magazine devoted to communes, carried a story on Gorda Mountain, stating, in part,

In 1962 Amelia Newell owned some land on the Big Sur coast. It was called Gorda Mountain. Amelia decided to make this land available to anyone who wished to come live there. As the hippie movement grew, so also did the inhabitants of Gorda. At the peak of the 1967 summer there were over 200 young hippies living on Amelia's land....Its final demise was in 1968.

The demise came, according to Jack Curran, after a CDF ranger told Mrs. Newell

she would probably be held financially responsible for suppression costs for any fire started there by her tenants. She thought this over for a day or two and then decided to evict them.

Emilia (the correct spelling), born in Russia, grew up in China, was a sculptress; she married and divorced Gordon Newell, the sculptor. She died in the late 1980s. This is the area Don Harlan called Boydville and Tuck Krenkel called Boidsnest after the previous owners, Madge Boyd and her son, Pat.

**Ref:** Jack Curran "Informal Report" King City, July 11, 1967, copy in DTC's files; "Gorda Mountain" in *The Modern Utopian*, Vol.5, No.1-3 (combined):129; Harlan 1971:7 quoting Krenkel; Jeff Norman in *Monterey Life*, August 1980; p.c. JN November 28, 1990, quoting Wally Henkel; and July 12, 1991

**Gorda Post Office** Established, according to Charles H. Plaskett, the first postmaster, on March 25, 1893, "in the SEQ Sec.19 T23S R5E about 8 miles NW of Mansfield on route No. 76547." It received its mail by wagon road and trail over the mountains from Jolon twice a week. Shirley (Plaskett) Merritt, in conversation with a reporter, stated that