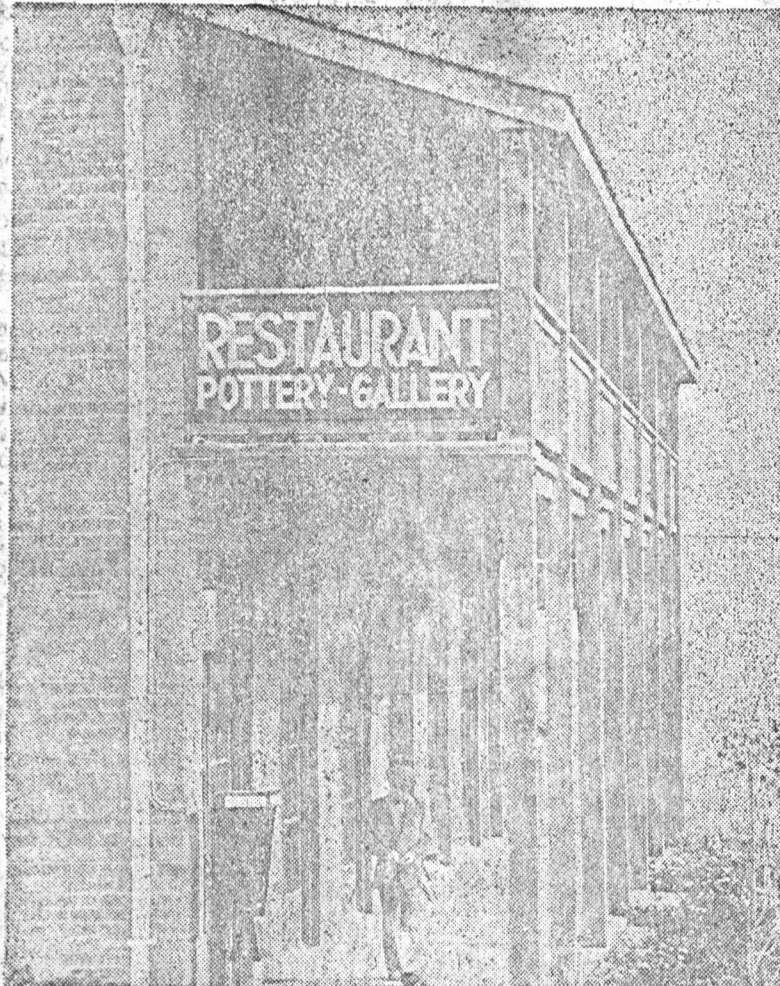


Today is... Travel

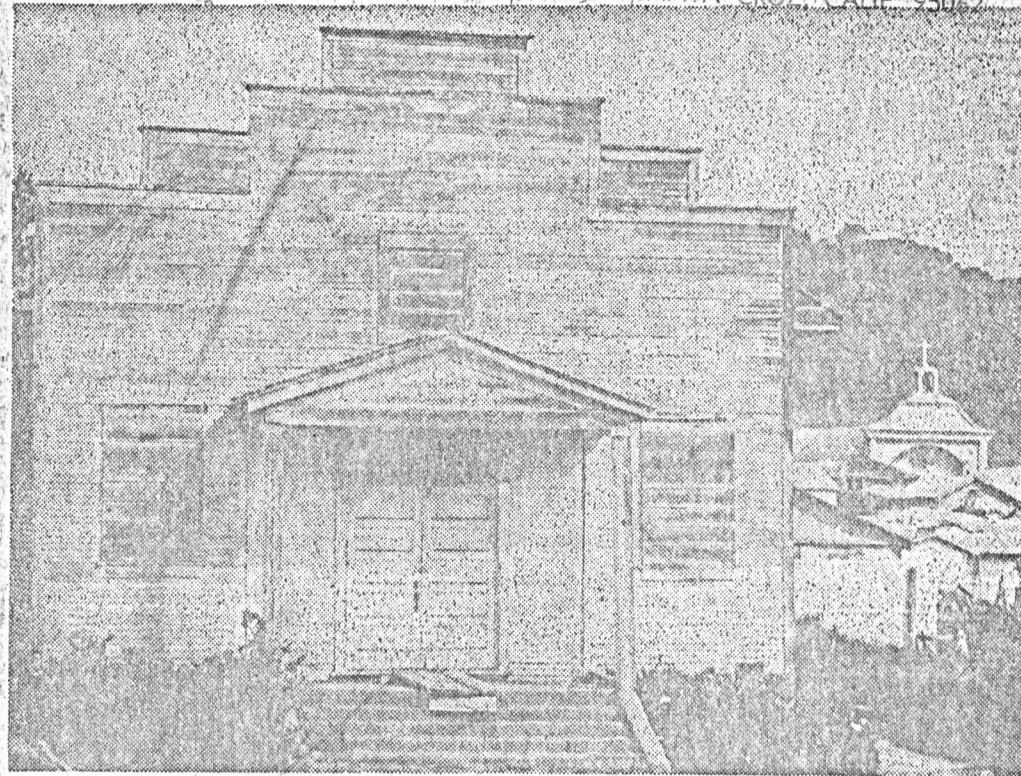
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Times Photos by Amy Huntoon

The New Davenport Cash Store and Pottery Restaurant is located where the town's general store once stood.



One of the many weathered structures found in Davenport. The steeple of St. Vincent de Paul church can be seen at right.

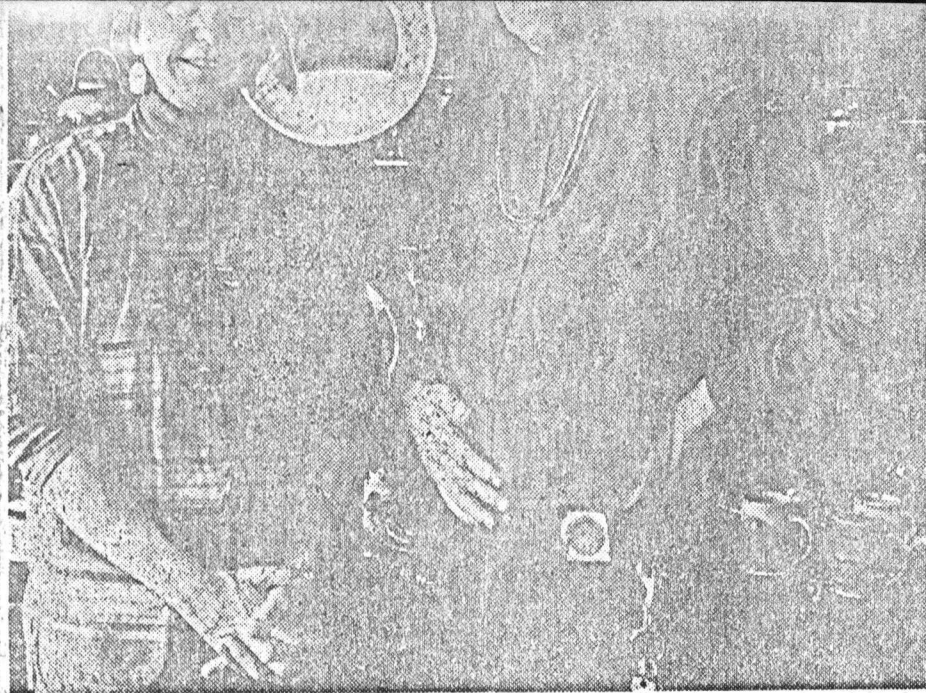
Old California flavor thrives in historic town of Davenport

By Cinde Chorness

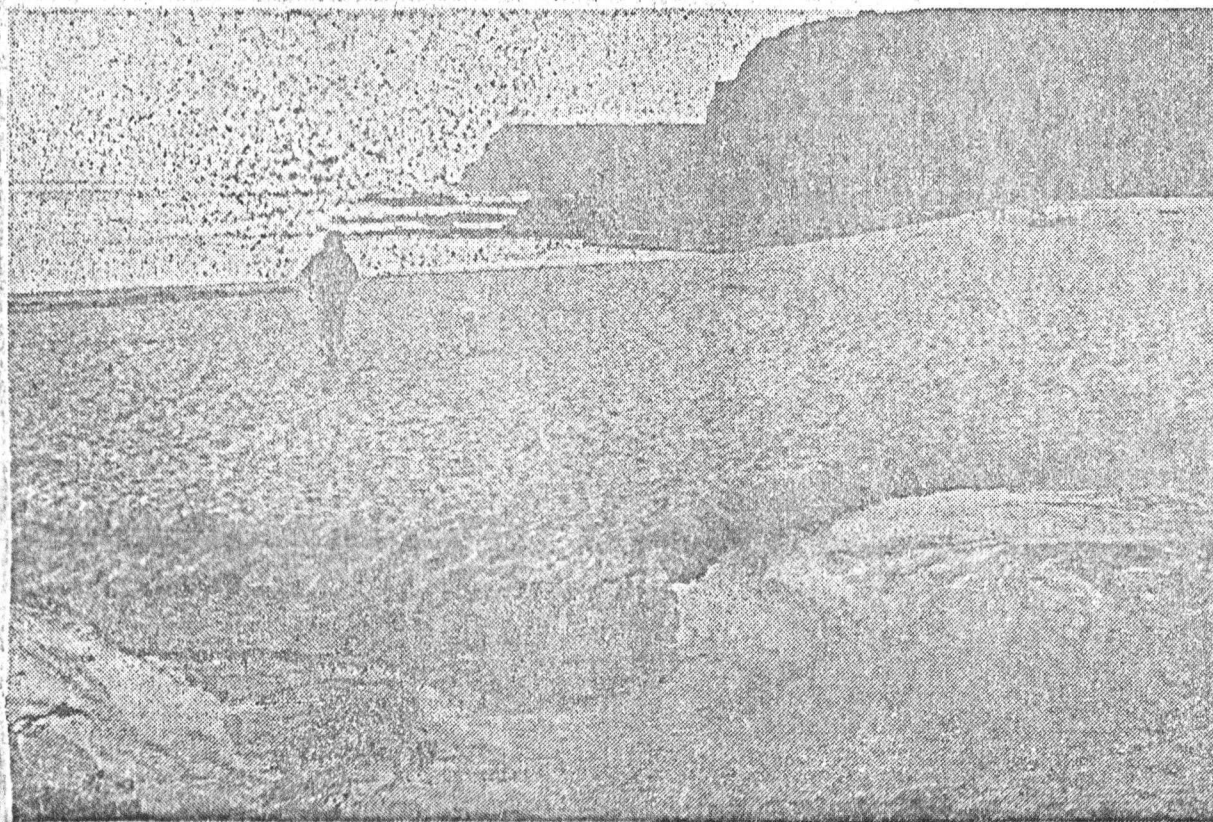
A chance to breathe in a bit of old California can be found in the tiny oceanside town of Davenport, located no more than an hour's drive

Route 84 dead-ends at Highway 1, where you turn left and head south along the coast. The beauty of the coast is, of course, legendary.

Everyone on the highway in



Ceramic framed mirrors and dishes are displayed behind Marcia and Bruce McDougal, owners of The Cash Store.



tucked-away sites for an afternoon of exploring.

The drive to Davenport is an adventure in itself. Take Highway 280 north to the Woodside-Route 84 exit, and make a left turn once off the highway.

Route 84 twists and climbs through the Woodside hills past the small towns of Skylonda, La Honda and San Gregorio.

Most of the drive will take you through deserted wooded areas, broken by an occasional ranch or countryside mansion. At almost any point along the drive you have a view of the bay that stretches from Oakland to San Jose.

Route 84 continues to wind through hilly farmland and ranches where a few farmers still raise cattle and sheep for a living.

Dotted along the road are weathered, deserted barns that stand as silent monuments to a way of life that is slowly becoming extinct. But for the paved road and telephone poles, the year could be 1892.

from Needles, so feel free to gawk as much as you want.

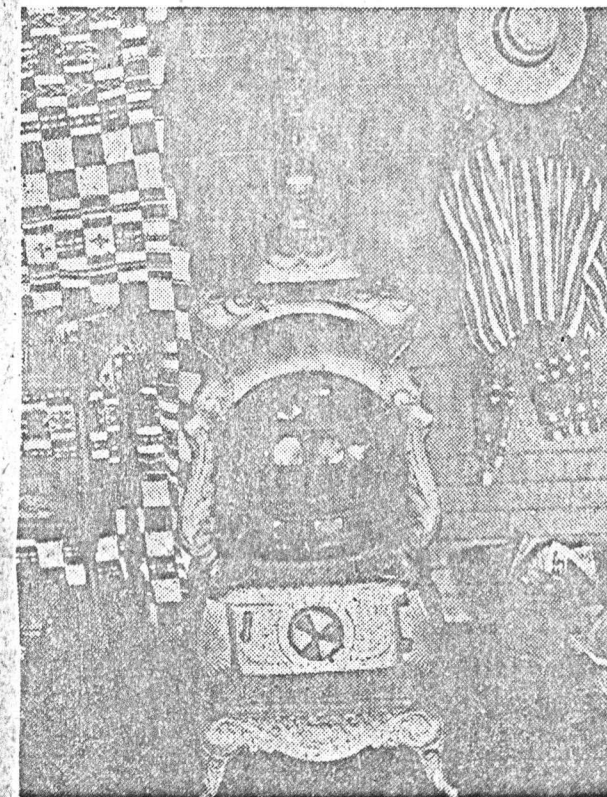
Davenport is about a half hour from the turn off Route 84. Road signs will tell you when the town is nearing, so relax and enjoy the view.

When you reach Davenport, pull off the road, park on one of the dirt lots at the side of the road and stop looking for the rest of the town. The service station, general store, cafe and restaurant collected on the side of the highway is the town of Davenport. The streets behind the "downtown" area are lined with picturesque houses where the town's residents (population 200) live.

Across the highway there is a small stretch of beach, and cliffs steep enough to make you believe at least one pair of star-crossed lovers jumped from them to their deaths.

Davenport's history, however, takes a different turn.

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Antiques such as this stove add to the old

The town was founded about 1870 by Capt. John Pope Davenport, a whaler from Rhode Island. He built a wharf and began a shipping business, sending cargos of cedar, tanbark and timber to San Francisco.

The area became known as Davenport Landing, and a town grew up around the wharf. In 1851 Capt. Davenport began his whaling business when he discovered that large schools of gray whales swam near the coast during their annual migration south.

Davenport is still one of the best places to view the migration, which continues at this time of year through mid-May.

In Capt. Davenport's time, crews would go out from shore, kill the whale and tow it back to the wharf where the blubber was removed and stored in large pots. His whaling business continued until 1880, when it was abandoned due to lack of demand for whale blubber.

Capt. Davenport moved to Santa Cruz, where he died in 1892 at the age of 74.

Capt. Davenport's wharf is no longer standing. Today, the town's

most imposing structure is the Santa Cruz Portland Cement Co. Built in 1906, the cement plant is not exactly a charming reminder of old Davenport. But several landmarks convey the flavor of the town.

At the end of Davenport Avenue is St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, built in 1915. The church is in good condition and is still used by the residents. The stained glass windows are a highlight of the Spanish style church.

Davenport's town jail, built in 1914, stands in its original location several yards off the highway. Next to the jail is the spot where The Davenport Cash Store was located.

The Cash Store sold the residents of old Davenport everything from clothing to gasoline. It also served as a social center for the town until the store burned to the ground in the early 1950s.

Today, The New Davenport Cash Store and Pottery Mart stands in its place as a charming and unique reminder of the past.

The site was purchased about six or seven years ago by Bruce and Marcia McDougal, a couple who saw the land as an opportunity to fulfill a well thought-out dream.

The McDougals, both professional potters, in 1967 founded Big Creek Pottery, a ranch-style school in Davenport where students live and study pottery.

Before long the McDougals were cooking for sometimes 40 students at a time, and the idea of starting a restaurant more or less "evolved."

"We had all the pottery, and we liked the idea of a place where it could be displayed," says Bruce, 48. "We always fed people at the ranch, and it just seemed to evolve naturally."

In the back of the restaurant is a studio where the McDougals and three other potters "throw" the pottery sold in the store. The restaurant food is made by various people, including some of the potters.

"People who make pottery seem to like to cook and bake," says Marcia, 47. Anyone who wants a hand in the cooking contributes.

"It seems our purpose is to make a place where people can work or be creative," says Bruce. "We set the stage for that, and it brings us a lot of satisfaction."

The restaurant was designed by the McDougals to recreate the "old California style."

ried out to the hard wood floors, antique tables, chairs and cash registers. Tall shelves are lined with ceramic bowls, plates, mugs and baking dishes colored in warm, earthy tones of brown, copper, green and blue. Bright wall hangings and plants add to the decor.

The restaurant is comfortable and homey. The McDougals often sit and chat with guests, and there's always a newspaper or two floating around for the customers' perusal.

Open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, The Store offers a breakfast and lunch menu. Specialties of the house include omelets, sandwiches, soups and salads. Wine, beer, mineral water and herb teas are served. Many of the vegetables in the homemade dishes come fresh from the garden of son Kristen, one of the McDougals' three children.

Restaurant customers are invited to jot down comments in a guest book which the McDougals read "religiously."

One guest writes, "Great—reasonable prices and aesthetically pleasing to the eye."

The comment could well apply to all of Davenport.