

New Law May Doom Picturesque Structures

Unsafe Buildings Face Demolition

By BOB LIGON
Mercury Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — A new law aimed at curbing influx of the "undesirable transient element" could spell doom for some of Santa Cruz County's most colorful landmarks.

County Supervisors have adopted an unsafe structures code with the idea of stopping foot-free youths from occupying abandoned mountain cabins.

The law, however, requires that any unsafe, unoccupied building be torn down by the owner.

This pertains to historic-type structures as logger and miner shacks, old ghost towns, barns, and other ancient structures.

The county, especially in summer, is plagued with hundreds of young people occupying remote mountain cabins without permission. Several forest fires have been accidentally started by the youths, state forestry officials say.

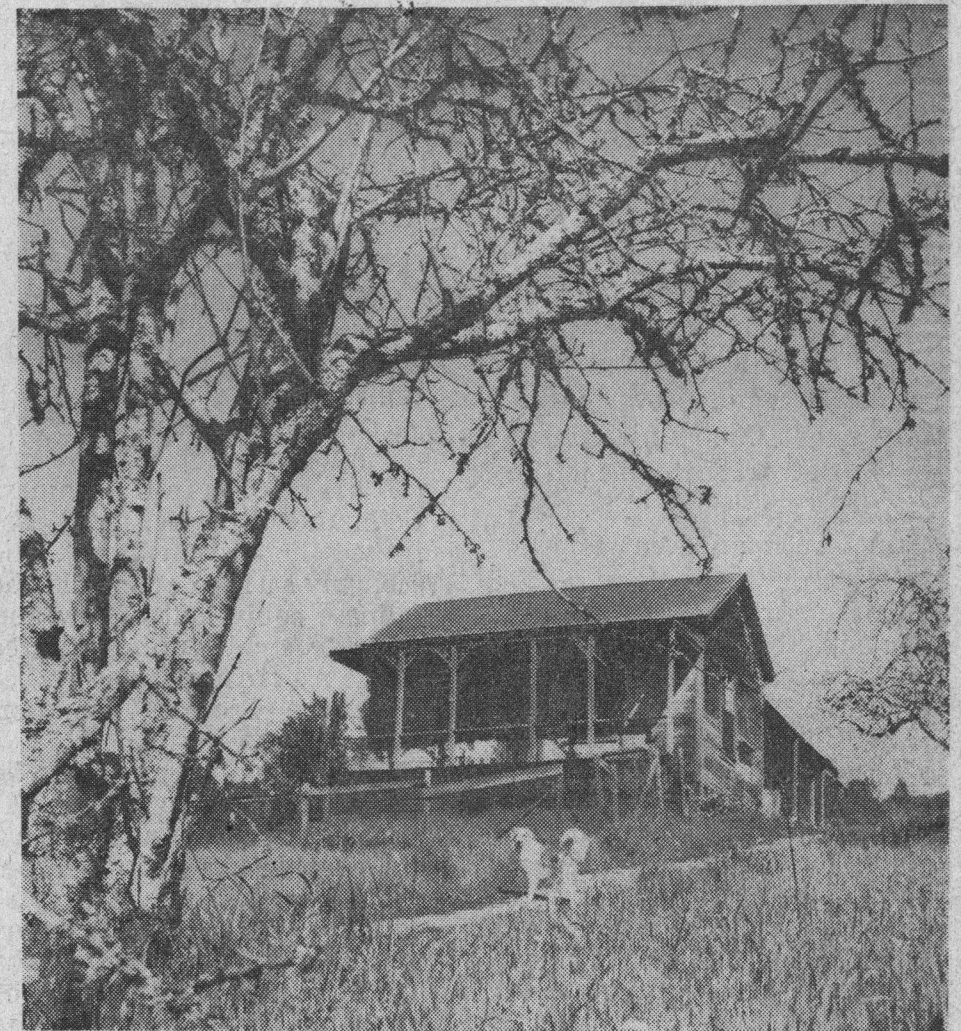
Last summer's giant Ben Lomond forest fire was started by a group of young cabin "squatters," a forestry official told supervisors in re-

questing adoption of the law. The County Public Works Department estimated there are up to 1,000 old buildings in the county that must come down under the new law.

Supervisors adopted Volume 4 of the 1970 California Uniform Building Code, which gives the county power to order demolition of buildings that create a safety, fire, or health hazard. If the owner refuses to tear down the structure, the county will do it and add the cost to the owner's tax bill.

Supervisors said that decision for a new building inspector will be included in next year's budget to operate the new program. As a policy stand, supervisors agreed that "enforcement would be limited to abandon dangerous buildings and those dangerous buildings with unauthorized occupancy."

Supervisors discussed the possibility of making the law apply to all occupied buildings, but decided against this, saying it would result in "selective" law enforcement.

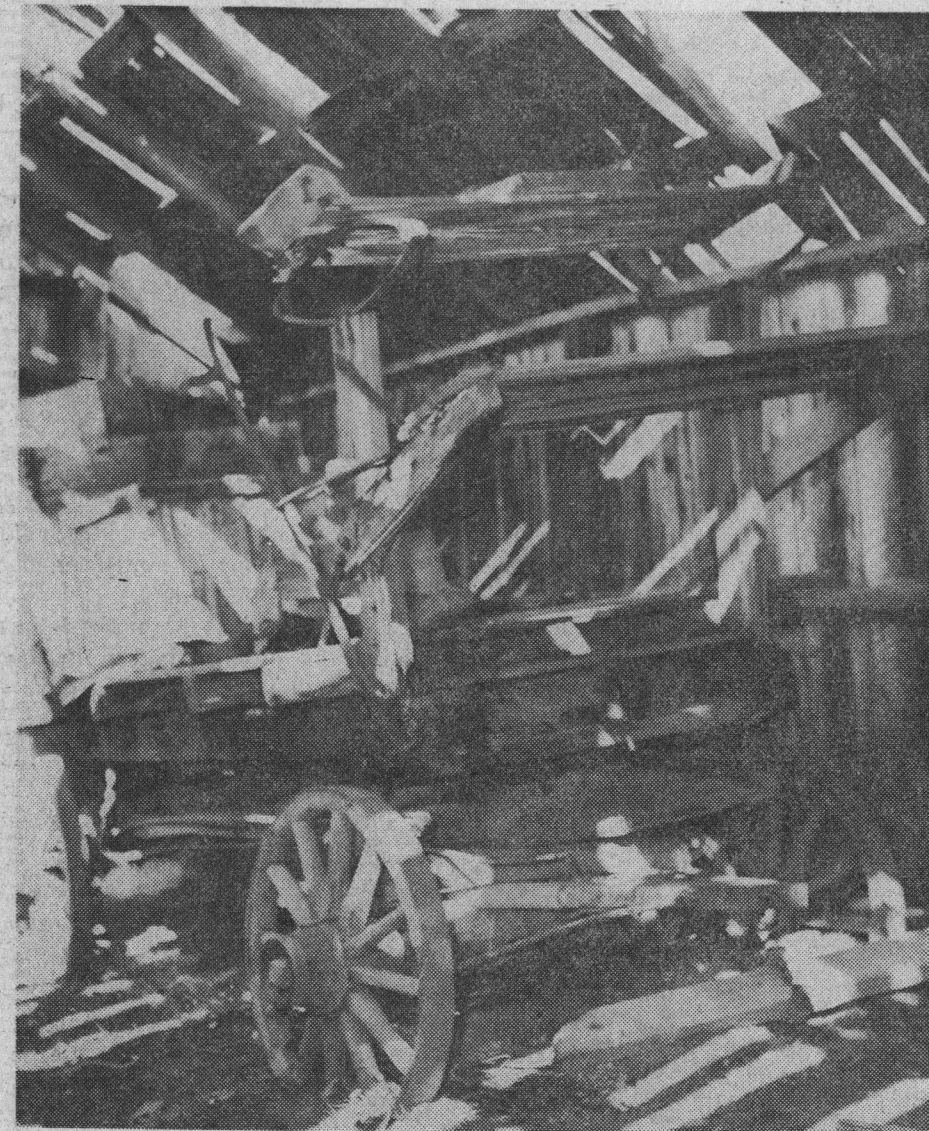


UNSAFE?—Old houses such as this one in the Mt. Madonna area may have to be demolished

under Santa Cruz County's new unsafe structures code. The new

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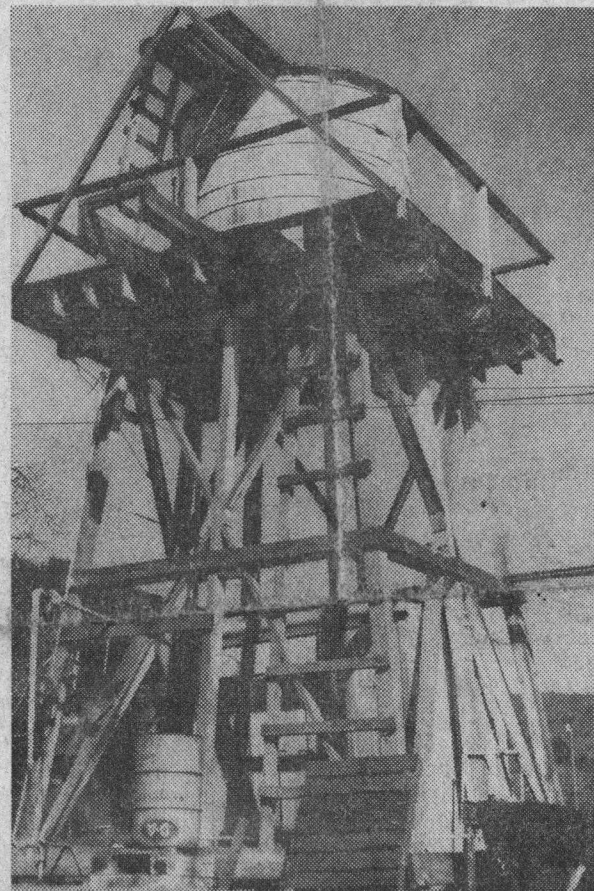
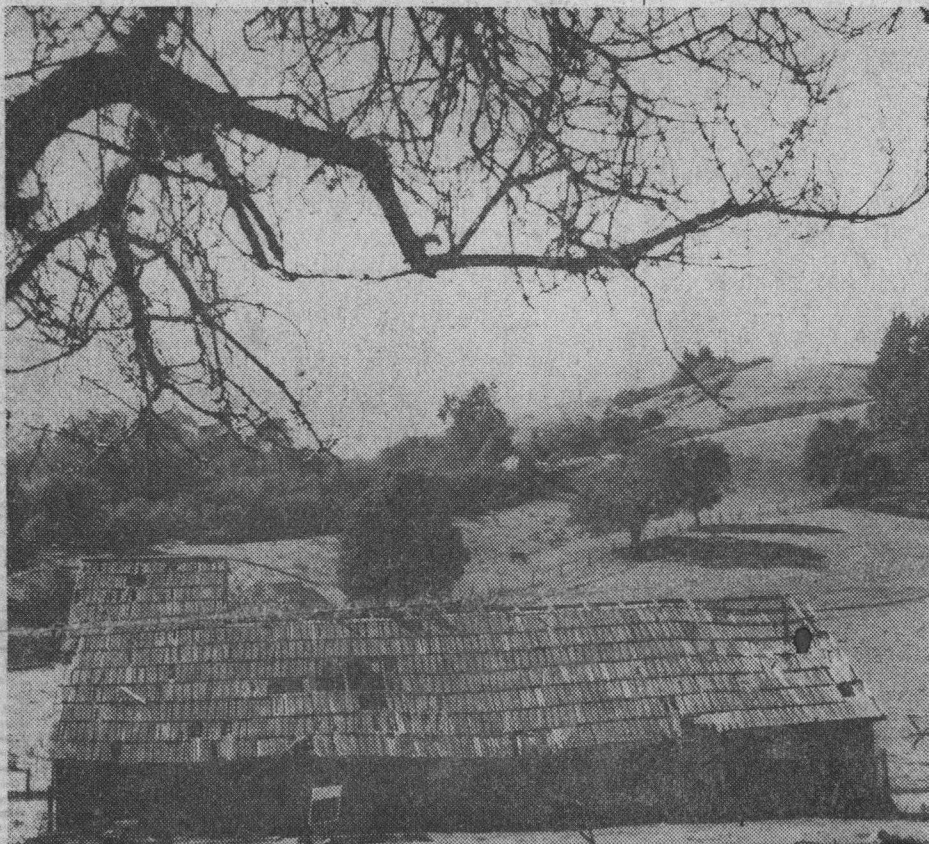
law is aimed at preventing hippies from taking over abandoned homes in the county.



WAGON — Many old structures in the Santa Cruz Mountains con-

tain "finds" like this ancient wagon. Under Santa Cruz County's

new unsafe structures code, such buildings would have to be razed.



The Mercury

★ SAN JOSE, CALIF., WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 10, 1971 35

Monterey Supervisors Delay Well Approval

SALINAS — Monterey County Supervisors Tuesday indicated they favor a use permit allowing a well and filtering machinery sought by the California-American Water Co. in Carmel Valley.

Supervisors delayed approval, however, until March 30 to give the company time

to eliminate some of the causes of strenuous objections from valley residents.

The company wants to drill a well, install iron removal equipment and a filtering system on about two acres on the Carmel River about four miles from the entrance to the valley.

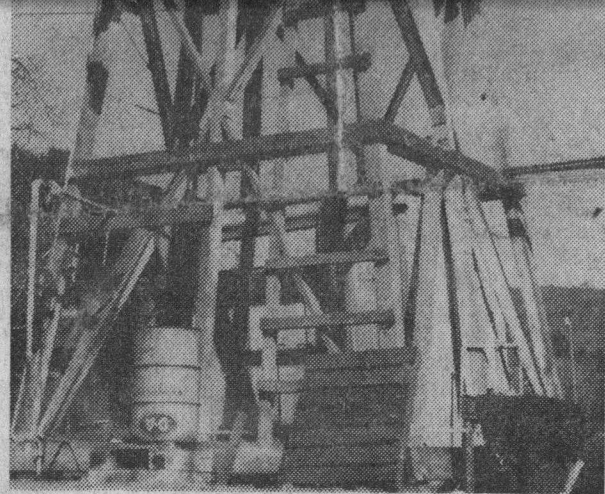
Residents of the area complained that the well would kill off some of the cottonwoods and willow trees and a grad-

la to provide water," he said. Dr. Edward C. Stone, professor of ecology from the University of California at Berkeley, said he has made a study of the trees along the river banks for the water company.

"What we're seeing is a killing off of the cottonwoods and willow trees and a grad-



BARN — This rickety



WATER TANK—Scores of old water tanks similar to this one along Casserly road north of Watsonville are standing throughout Santa Cruz County. They'll soon come under close scrutiny under the county's new unsafe structures code.

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