

CIRCUIT RIDER

BY LEON ROWLAND

PARSONS WAS SON OF PIONEER OF 1850

The death last Sunday of William B. Parsons removed another link of present day Santa Cruz with the time when its pioneers were Forty-Niners and the county was new.

"Bill" Parsons' father was Henry Fell Parsons, a 28 year old Englishman who came down from San Francisco on the schooner Curlew, arriving in Santa Cruz November 28, 1850, and being landed through the surf on the shoulders of Joe Roberts.

Parsons, born at Barton Hall, near Manchester, had crossed the Atlantic at the age of 11 to join two brothers who became noted New York City lawyers. He worked as a dry goods clerk in New York and Philadelphia and was partner in a store in St. Louis in 1847.

After crossing the plains in 1849 he mined on Weaver Creek at Dry Diggings (now Placerville) in Eldorado county and acted as purchasing agent in Sacramento for Pegleg Smith's trading post on Onion Creek.

WAS EXCELLENT PENMAN

A flurry of prospecting in Santa Cruz county which found only minor traces of gold brought Parsons here. His excellent penmanship and knowledge of accounting won him a deputy's place under Peter Tracy, first county clerk, and work as deputy for Sheriffs Francisco Alzina and L. G. Caldwell.

One of his first jobs was when he was hired by Tracy and Tom Wright, the surveyor, to salvage freight from the schooner Osceola which had been wrecked near the mouth of the Soquel river. Later he farmed for a time on what is today the tract south of Soquel avenue, west of Rrana Gulch.

In 1858 he bought 600 acres of Carbonero Rancho from William Thompson. The tract was north of today's Pasatiempo. When, the following year, he married Emma Warwede, one of four sisters in San Francisco who found husbands in Santa Cruz (the others were Werner Finkeldey, Ernest Kunitz and Charles Bern), he established his home there.

On his land was an outcropping of granite which had been used to build the county's second jail, on the hill near the Catholic church.

CREDITED WITH NAMING WATSONVILLE

To "Hy" Fell Parsons is ascribed naming Watsonville. As deputy sheriff in 1852 he was given papers to serve on claimants of land on the Pajaro river in the suit of Jonathan H. Watson and Currell Gregory to establish title to Rancho Bolsa del Pajaro.

Three families named Watson were living on the north bank of the Pajaro. Parsons, asked where he was going, is said to have replied casually, "to Watsonville."

When he first bought his part of Carbonero he sold timber to the paper mill on the flat which is now Paradise Park until it was washed out in the winter of 1861-62.

In 1901 Parsons and his brothers in the east had exhumed the body of their father at Manchester and brought it to the family vault at Rye, N. Y. The father had drowned in 1839 in a terrific sea off the coast of England.

In his later years Parsons farmed his hill top acres and developed a pit from which he sold sand and gravel. He died September 24, 1904, survived by three children, William, who died a week ago; Elisabeth, who had married in 1880 Robert Hamilton; and electro, who married in 1906, J. W. Childs of Upland, Calif.

OUR LOGGING RAILROADS ARE THING OF PAST

The prospective dismantling of the seven-mile logging railroad of the Santa Cruz Lumber Co., told elsewhere in this issue, will end the existence of the last of seven privately owned rail lines in the Santa Cruz mountains built and operated solely for transportation of logs to sawmills.

The first was F. A. Fihn's narrow gauge from Aptos, built in 1883-84, which ran up Trout Gulch and to Valencia where its feeder ends durned up into the timbered hills. It was followed in a year or so by the Loma Prieta line, built by H. L. Bassett and Timothy Hopkins, which brought to their mill logs cut in the hills to the north, and continued to junction with the mainline railroad at Aptos.

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Yesteryears

(From The Sentinel Files)

75 YEARS AGO

The Mission street hill was given a fill of decomposed granite to make it usable as a street past the new school house.

John S. Ord, whose ranch fronted the bay between Soquel and Aptos, announced plans for a bathing camp and beach similar to Camp Capitola.

50 YEARS AGO

The county supervisors extended until 1904 the franchise for the Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville electric line to build an extension out the Soquel road from Cayuga street to Arana gulch.

A \$250 scholarship at the University of California was offered Santa Cruz high school graduates by Ernest V. Cowell.

25 YEARS AGO

Property owners of Twin Lakes petitioned the supervisors to institute a lighting district to provide street lights in that area.

Andy Balich announced plans to erect a concrete garage building at Front and Short streets to replace the 60 year old residence once occupied by Dr. C. L. Anderson.

gauge rails of the Gazos Creek Railroad company operated into the mountains from the San Mateo coast.

LITTLE STEAM LINES ONCE THOUGHT ESSENTIAL

Above Boulder Creek the Middleton-Daugherty interests ran rails up the middle fork which operated into the present century.

On Laurel Creek Hihn had another logging road which supplanted skidways to feed the mill which supplied most of the lumber that rebuilt San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake.

Another little line which hauled
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