

Scotts Valley Cavalcade shows county's history

COUNTY NEWS 6-30-77

Helped along by Roots and the Bicentennial, the nation's nostalgia epidemic rampages on -- and feeding this madness is the Scotts Valley Cavalcade, a family-style outdoor extravaganza of stomping, swaying dance and music and stirring narrative, telling how Santa Cruz County grew up.

On weekend evenings in July -- on a stage the size of a football field -- Indian tom-toms, conquistadors, Mexican dancers, live music, cavalry bugles, posses, bootleggers, stage coaches, trains and Model "T" Fords will boisterously beat, kick, toot, shoot, clatter, sputter and croon their way through 200 years of local history.

As anyone who saw last year's show can tell you, the county's roots are not the dry, wizened stuff of textbooks, nor the "gee whiz" pap of your typical patriotic pageant.

COUNTY PEOPLE

Just long enough back so that locals don't have to feel embarrassed, Santa Cruz County had its share of bandidos, gunfighters, dancehall floosies, shady judges, lynchings, coolie labor, bootlegging and the Ku Klux Klan (who sponsored the first Miss California Pageant).

Of course some folks were respectable. Rescuing the Cavalcade from rogue's gallery are peace-loving Ohlone Indians, Spanish missionaries, sturdy pioneers, temperance ladies and other God-fearing souls.

Thanks to the energetic research of local historians and the sensitive, spirited script which Dennis Carlile wrote for narrator Kelley Houston, the Cavalcade brings us the facts of the county's past as they merge with legend.

As Carlile explains in the play's prologue: "...all is true, as true as the mists of the past will permit us to view the flags and rags of actuality."

250 PERFORMERS

Like history, the Scotts Valley Cavalcade is people -- an estimated 250 of them on stage -- including families, kids and senior citizens. The youngest performer is three; the oldest 87. Another 200 will work behind the

scenes.

A few are seasoned performers but most have never been on stage before -- unless they were in last year's Cavalcade. Director Ben Trevor wouldn't have it any other way. With a professional background in legitimate theatre and Hollywood, Trevor believes the strength of the Cavalcade has much to do with the spontaneity and vitality which community performers bring to it.

PIONEER SPIRIT

"The Cavalcade is a story about pioneer spirit" Trevor explained, "the success of the Cavalcade depends on the heart and spirit of the people who enact the story. This year's Cavalcade will have the same heart, but more brain than last year."

There's plenty of scenery -- which was nearly non-existent last year -- a panoramic backdrop, more special effects and more vehicles, including an airplane and lunar module.

Masterminding all this is Technical Director Bill Williams, whose ingenious stage gadgetry includes a space capsule, a 1918 Sopwith Camel airplane, Victorian houses with "legs" and the boardwalk's ill-fated Neptune Casino. Every evening on stage -- to the "ooh's" and "ah's" of the crowd -- this twinkling pleasure palace of 1906 will be demolished by fire.

Producer Noorudin Billawala is responsible for this year's Cavalcade and plans to continue it as an annual tradition. "Mr. Billawala is both a dreamer and a pragmatist," Trevor commented, "the perfect combination for a producer."

The Scotts Valley Cavalcade can be seen July 4th and every Friday Saturday and Sunday during the month of July. Tickets can be purchased at The Ranch, 6017 Scotts Valley Drive, Scotts Valley, CA 95066, and Ticketron. Cost is \$5.50 for general admission, \$4.50 for senior citizens, \$3.00 for children under 12. General admission tickets purchased before July 1 at The Ranch are \$4.50. Performances start at 8 p.m.



SCOTTS VALLEY CAVALCADE is a real outdoor extravaganza that describes the county's history. Dressed appropriately are: (background L to R) Michele Melton and Carol Lee; (foreground) Heidi and Sandy Smith. The Second Annual Cavalcade runs every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in July.

REFER