

Samuel Leask At 99 Foresees Good Future For Santa Cruz

By Ron Miller

It is said the ancient Scottish clock in the hallway of the Samuel Leask home has never once shown the slightest sign of slowing down although it's better than 150 years old.

But you can bet your bottom dollar that venerable old timepiece will begin to falter long before the man who owns it, 99-year-old Samuel Leask Sr.

At an age when most men are content to sit in the sun and sleep, Leask is eagerly following the growth of Santa Cruz, a city he helped build from an 1890 cowtown to a heads-up community that is already one of the recreation centers of the Pacific coast.

Leask takes a daily auto ride through the wooded mountains of Santa Cruz and the thriving town that has burgeoned into existence from the few scattered buildings he saw when he opened his dry goods store here in 1892.

"Something has happened here in the past 10 years," the pioneer Santa Cruzan said. "There's a different spirit here now; a wide-awake spirit."

It must have been much the same kind of "wide-awake" spirit that brought Samuel Leask to Santa Cruz 69 years ago and told him there would be something big here someday. He had come a long way—from his birthplace at Tarves, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, to London and Boston and Memphis, Tenn., on to Texas, San Francisco and finally to Watsonville, where he went to work at the Charles Ford and Company dry goods store. The Seaside store in Santa Cruz was up for sale and Sam Leask came here to look it over.

It was an old store—only 22 by 60 feet—on the corner of Church street and Pacific avenue. He

bought the faltering business and went to work. The result of his "wide-awake" spirits is the present Leask's department store on the same site—the largest mercantile business in the city of Santa Cruz, a civic institution.

When he reached his 99th birthday on December 26, the elder Leask was given a birthday party at his home at 120 Green street. Present for the family-buffet luncheon were his children and their wives: Mr. and Mrs. Sam Leask Jr. of Los Angeles; Mr. and Mrs. Haswell Leask of Waterford; Mr. and Mrs. James B. Leask of Santa Cruz; Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood R. Leask of Waterford; and Mrs. R. P. Franklin (Margaret Leask) of San Carlos. Five of his 10 grandchildren were present and five of the 19 great-grandchildren.

At 99, Samuel Leask Sr. is looking forward to the future of Santa Cruz. He feels the city is finally coming out of a long period of backwardness and discouragement, that people are finally beginning to discover that Santa Cruz is "a pretty wonderful place after all."

Like that old clock in his hallway, Leask is still all wound-up with a pretty tight spring and he'll probably be keeping time with the forward pace of Santa Cruz for quite a few years to come.

13 TOTS DIE IN EARTH SLIDE IN INDIA

Bombay, India (P)—Thirteen children were killed in a landslide in Surat Friday. A hillock of yellow earth was being dug up by peasants who plaster the walls of their mud huts with it. Tons of earth buried 16 children playing nearby. Only three were saved.

that the invaders were not simply Lao units returning from training in North Viet Nam or Red China. The conviction of top U.S. officials is said to be that they are North Vietnamese forces.

Eisenhower, who has only 20 days remaining of his eight years in the White House, was described by other administration officials as determined to take whatever action is required to prevent a Communist takeover in Laos.

He will keep President-elect John F. Kennedy fully informed of the situation and of his decisions, it was said.

The most delicate element in consideration of possible strong U.S. counteraction, authorities said, is not in the imminent end of Eisenhower's administration but in a lack of enthusiastic support from Britain and France. This, as one official said, is one of the muddying factors in the situation.

Intensive consultations were reported under way among Washington, London and Paris. They have been involved in argument for some time on the nature of efforts to prevent Laos from becoming another Korea — a cockpit of combat between American Allied forces and Sino-Soviet bloc armies. If such a conflict should develop it would probably engulf the rest of Indochina.

Officially the White House was noncommittal about the dangers in the Laos crisis. Press secretary James C. Hagerty said "I am not applying labels, adjectives or the like."

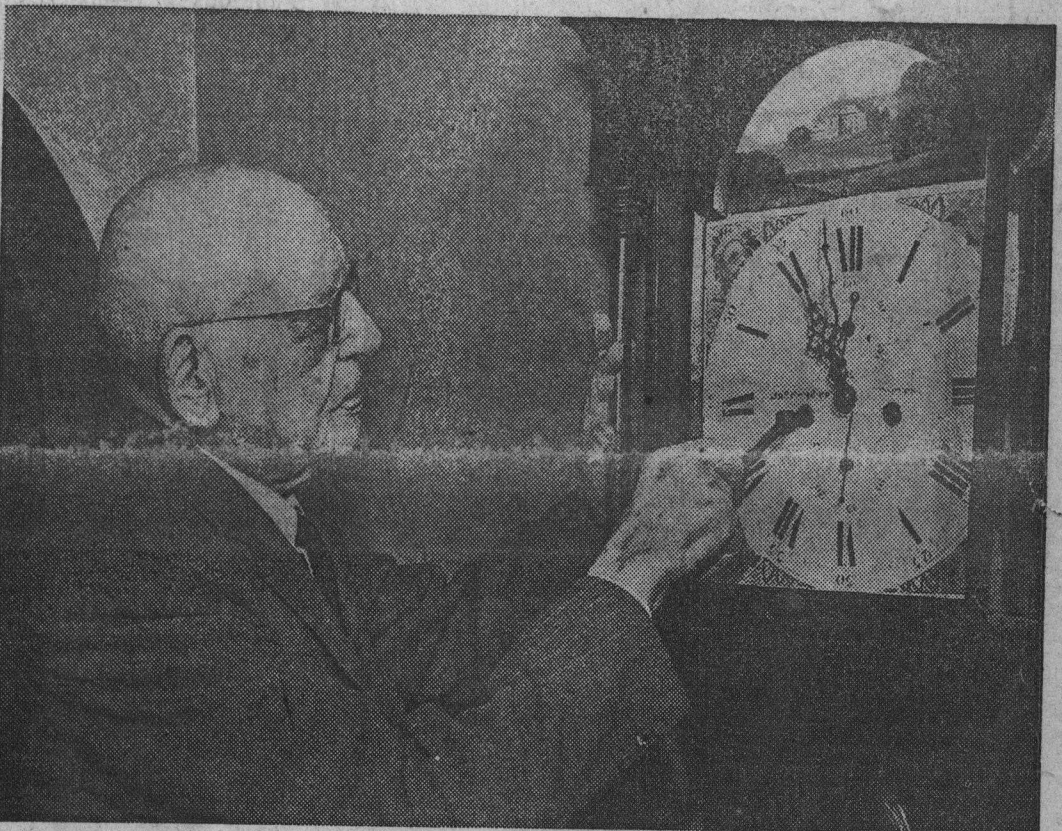
Car Catches Fire On Street

A 1959 automobile with three carburetors caught fire yesterday afternoon while it was parked at 744 River street.

A city fire department official said that considerable damage was done "under the hood" but he was unable to make a more definite estimate.

The car belongs to Mabel C. Yarnell, 160 Graham avenue.

Still Keeping Time



Samuel Leask Sr., 99, winds the 150-year-old Scottish clock in his hallway at 120 Green street. Like the clock, the elder Leask is still keeping time with

the forward pace of Santa Cruz. The pioneer Santa Cruzan came here in 1892 and built a dry goods store on the corner of Church street and Pacific ave-

nue into the huge mercantile business it is today. The store is now managed by his son, James Leask, and his grandson, Samuel Leask III.