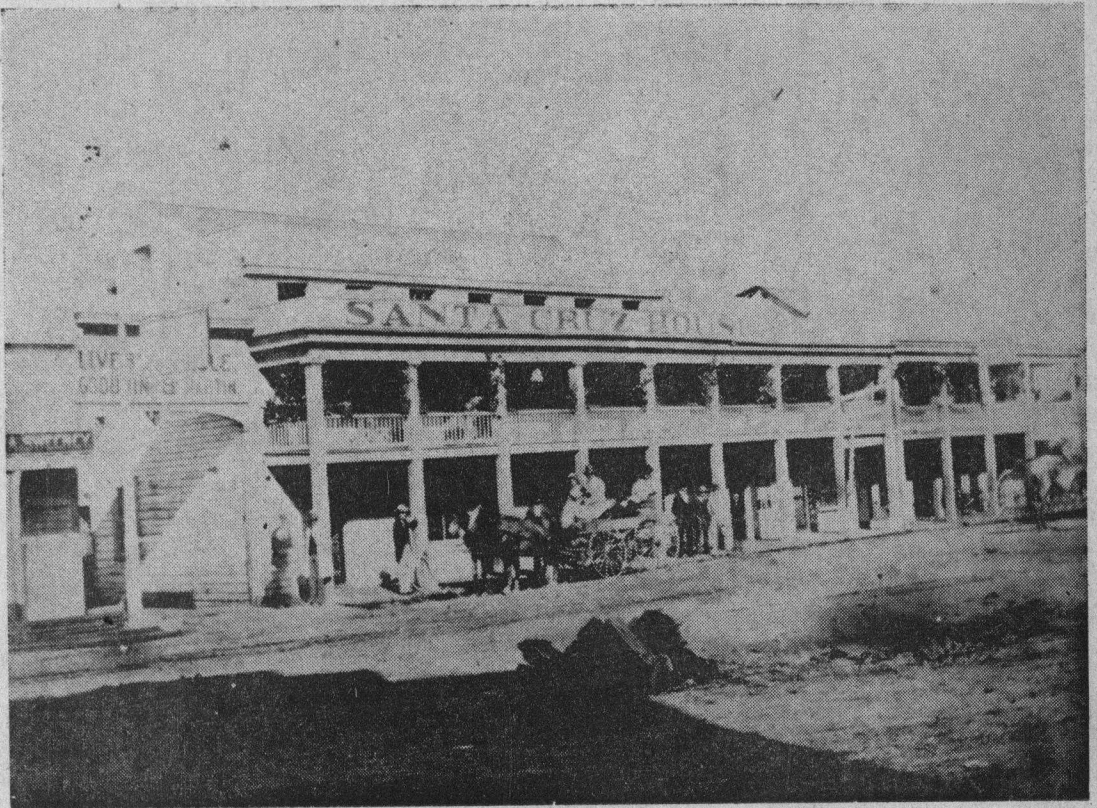


DUP.

Sawyer, Preston

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



LOCAL HOTELS OF LONG AGO

From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

In the earliest days here life centered about the "upper plaza", near the beginnings of the mission settlement.

But a little over a hundred years ago business activity began to move gradually down the hill, as enterprises grew along Mission street. Property values were cheaper there. The "bottom" land had never been as highly regarded as hill property.

Indeed it was not until after the gold fever of the early '50s had begun to cool somewhat that the sounds of ax and saw were heard in increasing tempo and the "lower plaza" came into its own.

Near the foot of Mission street was this area, where Main street (now Front) and Willow street (now Pacific avenue) converged.

Earliest Hotels

The upper plaza had its adobe Eagle Hotel, at what is now Em-

met and School streets. Down on Willow street the first hotel was the San Lorenzo Exchange, also known as the Lorenzo House and Exchange House, and as the Steamboat Exchange. Here was a small theater near the bar, where roving actors performed. The Exchange was wiped out in the big fire of July 25, 1865. It had stood on approximately the same site as the later Pacific Ocean House.

Santa Cruz House was about the first hotel on Main (Front) street. Adjoining it on the south was the Franklin House. These both were built nearly 100 years ago. They stood about where is today's Veteran's Memorial building.

Built of Redwood

First built of split redwood, Santa Cruz House was later rebuilt into a two story structure of sawed boards, with a half-story, or attic, upper section also given over to rooms. It was most picturesque with a long, covered porch with

railings and posts, and below was a plank sidewalk.

Porch posts at the railings were set off by potted plants, mainly red geraniums. The front had the appearance of an eastern roadside tavern. Its main entrance was about the center of the building, the low-ceilinged dining room to the left.

Directly to the north of the old hotel was the approach driveway, almost like a bridge, leading 200 or 300 feet back to the Goodwin & Martin stable, with its main floor 6 to 10 feet above the ground. Where it hasn't been filled in, there is still considerable low ground along the east side of that part of Front street.

Santa Cruz House was destroyed in the fire of May 30, 1887, which took the adjoining Swanton House. Also swept away was the remains of the already damaged Franklin House, which had had a fire of its own about six months before.