



More it is the only ham-  
own, or city within this  
of the state with an elec-  
railway running through it.  
railway hauls limestone

from the nearby quarry to the  
Santa Cruz Portland Cement  
plant and the workers ride it  
along with the U. S. mail.

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## NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY USED DAILY NEAR HERE

### Buena Vista, Little Known Hamlet Up Coast, Has Own Transportation

By Frank N. Jones

Quite a community is the little-known hamlet of Buena Vista, California, set high on a hill in second-growth redwoods three miles from wind-swept Davenport, up San Vicente canyon.

It has the usual advantages of most places in this end of Santa Cruz county; beautiful climate, a fine view, and nice homes with flower gardens and lawns.

There is one unique feature of life in Buena Vista, much of the travel and the U. S. mail goes by the only electric railway in this part of California. The reason being that the hamlet is on property owned by the Santa Cruz Portland Cement plant at Davenport and eight families live there because the men are employed in the nearby quarry.

Buena Vista's railroad is a narrow gauge electric and it has a run of about three miles from the plant up a ridge of San Vicente canyon to the limestone quarry. The limestone is hauled down the grade to a huge crusher, the first phase of cement manufacture.

Five men, headed by Harvey Wilson, the engineer, maintain and operate the line. There are two 500-volt Baldwin-Westinghouse electric engines for motive power. The cement company bought them from a Juneau, Alaska, mine 21 years ago.

In the morning Buena Vista workers only have to go a short distance to the quarry, but they ride the train because the tunnel is bored about one-half a mile in the limestone hill.

Big time of the day for the wives and youngsters is 3:50 p. m., as the train then carries workers finished on the day shift. The workmen swing off the cars as they slow down in Buena Vista on the way

back down to the barn at the plant.

There is a road to the hamlet, and a very poor one it is because it is partly on private land of the cement plant and the Coast Dairies and Land company, so the county does not keep it up. This road, a scenic ride as it winds along the bank of San Vicente creek, reaches a steep grade just below the community. As a motorist drives up the hill a peculiar sight greets the eye—an overhead "live wire" for a trolley, and supports at right angles from poles are the first things seen. Not an unusual sight to a city dweller, but indeed an unusual sight in such a remote spot.

If the only electric railroad in this part of the world is not enough, residents of Buena Vista can always boast about their mailbox, certainly the only one of its kind anywhere. This mailbox is in reality a cast-off headlight from an ancient steam locomotive.

It has at least one convenience over the orthodox type for residents can peer through the front glass, which is about 16 inches across, and see if they have a letter. Myrtle Garaventa, postmistress at Davenport, sends up the mail via train each morning. Mrs. C. I. Wilson, seen in the picture with Edwyl Tuell, has been using the headlight mailbox for five years and says it "works just as good as anybody could want."

Mrs. Wilson has been a resident of the hamlet for 15 years and her husband is a quarry compressor-man. Aside from the bumpy road, she believes Buena Vista is a fine place to live.

It was not hard to gather that the eight families of Buena Vista, California, are people of culture and charm—especially after Mrs. Wilson assured the reporter that families subscribe for the El-News.