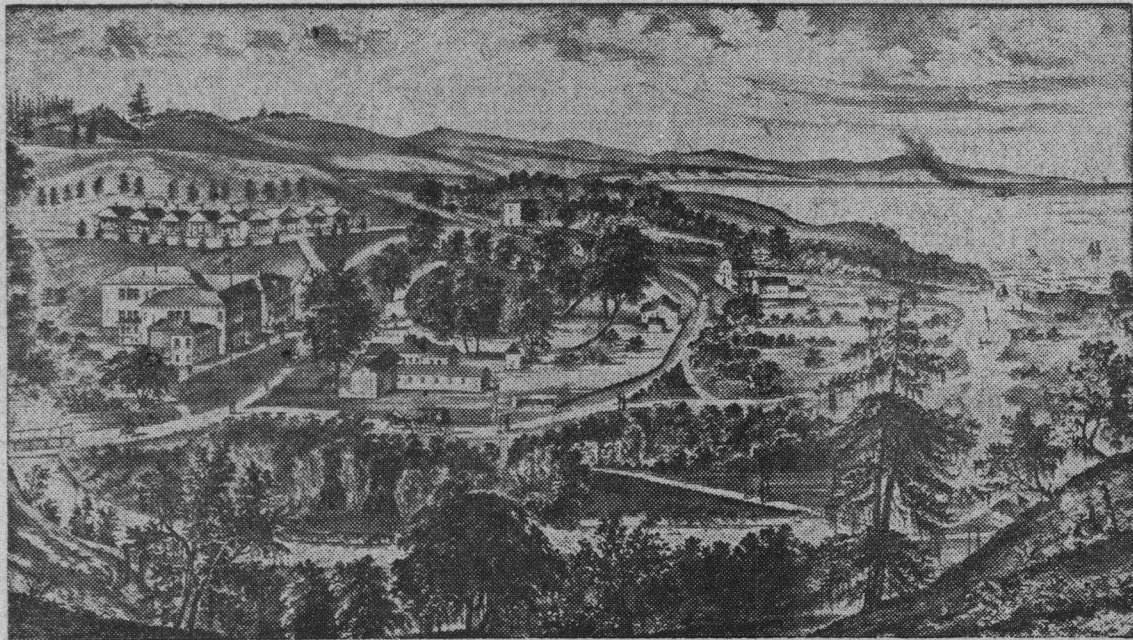


# Santa Cruz Yesterdays



## SPRECKELS' EARLY APTOS DEVELOPMENT (From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

At the age of 43 Claus Spreckels, already several times a millionaire from his sugar business, bought from Rafael Castro 2400 acres, a little more than a third of the grant on the north shore of Monterey bay which had been given Castro in 1833.

For three decades the German-born sugar king made Aptos a place for entertaining on a princely scale.

On the lowland below the present Aptos he built a hotel to care for his guests. It shows as the largest building, at the left. Above it were erected a row of cottages which were at the disposal of friends who visited him. Across the road from the hotel was a clubhouse (center) with an outdoor dancing pavilion and a bowling alley. Toward the bay

were stables for the teams of those who drove to Aptos to accept his hospitality.

Spreckels' own home was a mile east of present day Aptos, opposite the entrance to Rio del Mar. North of it, in a little valley, were stables for the thoroughbreds he raised, with a circular running track enclosing a polo field.

The little wharf Rafael Castro had built was enlarged by Spreckels who shipped from it lumber to Hawaii to build a home there, which was a duplicate of that at Aptos, and his sugar refineries.

### Entertained A King

In the Aptos residence, which later burned, Spreckels for a day in October, 1881, entertained King Kalakua of the Sandwich Isles.

Legend is that the king, arriving

unexpectedly by train from Watsonville, found Claus without a carriage at the little depot. A neighbor offered transportation in his farm wagon, hospitably urging: "Get in, Claus. Get in, king."

Spreckels, who built a school house for Aptos and enlarged the school grounds Castro had previously given, died in 1908. His extensive establishment gradually disintegrated in the ownership of his three sons and in 1925 Monroe, Lyon & Miller, a San Francisco peninsula real estate firm, bought 2390 acres and instituted a plan to sell golf and country club memberships with lots in the tract, which is today's Rio del Mar.