

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



RELIC OF APTOS' LAVISH DAYS

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Still standing three quarters of a mile up the hill above Aptos is the fine old home erected three quarters of a century ago by Claus Mangels, manager of the 2400 acre estate which in 1872 Claus Spreckels, the sugar millionaire, had bought from the heirs of Rafael Castro.

Three homes, very similar in architecture, were erected on the Spreckels estate. One was for the sugar king himself, on a site across the old Santa Cruz-Watsonville highway from the entrance to Rio del Mar. It burned many years ago.

Kin of Mrs. Spreckels

Two brothers of Spreckels' wife came to live on the Aptos estate. Claus Mangels was manager of his brother-in-law's land holdings and diversified interests.

The other brother-in-law, John Mangels, married Maryanne Corcoran, of the family which gave Corcoran's lagoon its name, and built his home on the lower land between the highway and the coast. It, too, has gone.

The old residence still in existence was originally reached by a road which followed closely along the east bank of Aptos creek. With sale of property along it the old road has been closed. The home

is now to be reached by a route which years ago was the right of way of the logging railroad from Aptos to the Loma Prieta saw mill.

Surviving Home Place

The house, still the property of one of the heirs of Claus Mangels, is now occupied only by a caretaker. The grounds, once carefully tended, have lost their old magnificence.

A fourth home which was almost identical in architecture with the three at Aptos was that which Spreckels built in Honolulu. When he became interested in sugar production in the Hawaiian islands he

shipped lumber cut in the Aptos hills off the Aptos wharf to Honolulu, where visitors who knew his Aptos residence, could recognize its counterpart.