

COURTESY OF SALZ TANNERY



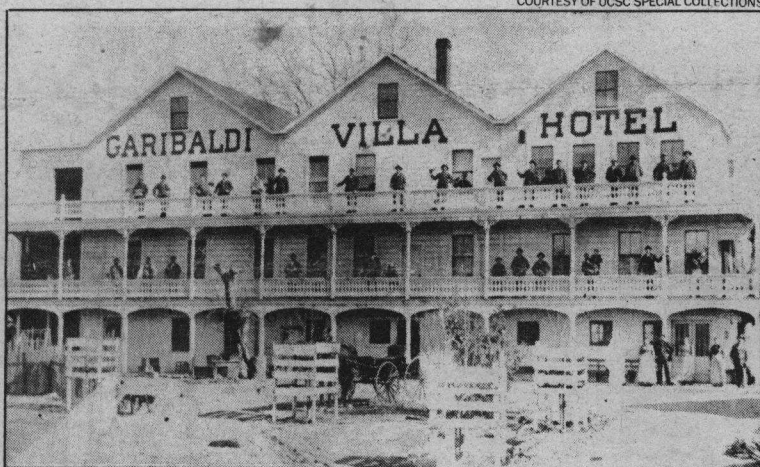
Manual Anecito, an immigrant from the Portuguese Azores, drives a load of hides at Salz Tannery (circa 1940)

Part 1 ✓

# The History of Ethnic Santa Cruz

Some 18 different groups call our community home

COURTESY OF UCSC SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



John Costella's Garibaldi Villa Hotel, on Front near Cooper (circa 1900)

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Native Sons of the Golden West parade down Pacific Avenue in 1891; leaders later campaigned against Japanese immigration

*The Santa Cruz melting pot. More than 18 distinct ethnic groups now call this area home, adding a rich racial texture to the community.*

*In this series, to be continued through summer, GOOD TIMES explores the roots, customs and future of many of these groups.*

by Shelley Buck

**A**LMOST two-thirds of Santa Cruz residents claim English, Irish or German roots, according to 1980 U.S. Census records. But the city (pop. 44,000) is also home to some 3,000 Hispanic, Italian and French, respectively. A thousand Asians share the community with an almost equal number of Black and Portuguese.

And more than 18 races and nationalities, including Scandinavian, Russian, American Indian, Scottish, Dutch, Greek, Hungarian and Ukranian, have roots in Santa Cruz.

The first to come were Indians who migrated to the coast for its shellfish thousands of years ago. Coastal Indians of many small tribes leached the poisons out of acorns to use the meat for flour, dug roots for basketmaking, and piled the remainders of their seafood dinners in mounds which grew to 30 feet tall and were later mined by enterprising settlers for lime.

The names Zayante, Soquel and Aptos and a taste for abalone are cultural contributions of these early residents. Some of their descendants,

from the Chippewa and Sioux tribes, still live in the area, according to Angela Wall of the Montana Blackfeet.

In 1542, the exploratory voyage of Juan Cabrillo along the California coast marked a turning point for the future of the coastal Indians. Though he was commissioned by Spain, Cabrillo is honored as an exploring hero by the state's Portuguese-Americans, who claim his true name was Joao Cabrilho. Whatever his roots, Cabrillo's explorations laid the groundwork for Spain's claim to Alta California. As fortune had it, the Indians of Santa Cruz were to live undisturbed for nearly two and one half centuries before Spanish plans for Santa Cruz impinged on their lifestyle.

But in 1791, Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, the founder of two more southerly missions, arrived at the site of present-day Santa Cruz. The Franciscan missionary wrote to his viceroy, "I said mass and raised the cross on the spot where the establishment is to be. Many gentiles came, old and young, of both sexes, and showed that they would gladly enlist under the sacred standard."

By "gentiles," Lasuen meant unconverted Indians, and they were not as glad to enlist as Lasuen had suggested. By 1796, the new mission's population of clerics and natives halted at 523. Foreign disease brought by the missionaries killed so many Indians that Spanish authorities decided a civilian colony of ex-soldiers was necessary to supplement the depleted population.

No ex-soldiers could be found who

## The Melting Pot

English, German, Irish	28,000
Hispanic	3,606
Italian	3,424
French	2,703
Asian	1,031
Polish	859
Black	835
Portuguese	736
Scandinavian	614
Russian	537
Native American	357
Scottish	350
Dutch	318
Greek	122
Hungarian	100
Ukranian	62

\*Santa Cruz City Population, U.S. Census Records, 1980



would willingly leave civilized Mexico for California, so the colony's first residents were convicts from the Guadalajara prison, who arrived in Alta California in 1797. The next year, a few families made their way to the convict settlement of Branciforte, not far from the Mission Santa Cruz.

These early settlers may have been descendants of African artisans from Spain, since Spanish records of the time considered all those who were not full-blooded Indians to be white. Alta California would later be ruled by three Black governors before becoming an American territory. Offspring of the Branciforte settlers later obtained larger land grants after Mexico's independence from Spain, and became known as the Californios.

A Californio descendant Carrie Electa Lodge, interviewed for an oral history in 1965, recalled that her grandmother, Martina Castro Lodge, made the shoes for the entire family by hand. Her grandfather, an Irishman who arrived in California on a whaling vessel, would walk from Soquel to Monterey when he had business there. What could not be made by hand had to be imported from factories as far away as Spain.

On their 35,000-acre Soquel grant, the Castro Lodge family made their own barrels, wagons and furniture. Despite the tales of fandangos and dons on horseback, Carrie Lodge's father, when he wanted to see relatives in Los Angeles, walked there and back.

Intermarriage among the immigrants was frequent. Martina Castro

Lodge, who received the Soquel grants, outlived two husbands, one Spanish and one Irish. Her third husband was of French ancestry, as were two of her sons-in-law. Her contemporary, Mrs. Lyman Swan of Santa Cruz, boasted of a mother related to Hawaiian royalty, a Spanish father and an English husband. She left her Santa Cruz home to tour Europe in the entourage of Hawaii's Queen Kapiolani.

Neither Spain nor Mexico was enthusiastic about immigration to Alta California, but they could not halt the influx of foreigners. Foreign trading ships sailed the coast to pick up hides and tallow from the ranchos and sailors of all seafaring nations jumped ship and stayed, despite bounties offered by sea captains for the return of straying seamen.

Early English settler William Thompson — believed by many to be a former pirate — changed his name to Buckle and settled in what is now Pasatiempo. For years Santa Cruzans dug holes on the property in efforts to discover pirate gold. Thompson was rumored to have buried there.

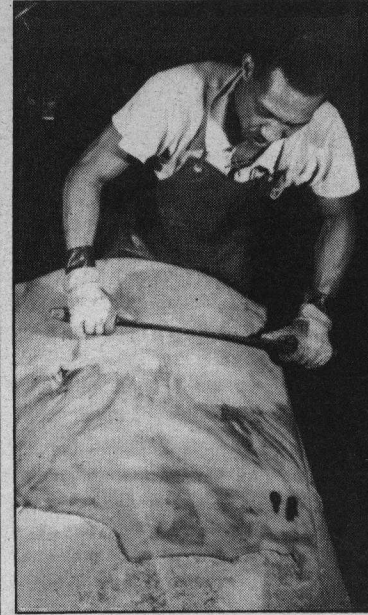
Trappers and traders invaded California from the British north and Yankee east. Free Blacks were also among these traders and early overland immigrants. The population of "foreigners" — many of them Americans — swelled. In 1846, a rebellion by Americans, covertly supported by the U.S. government, created the Bear Flag Republic, which quickly became an American state.

After gold was discovered, the trickle of immigration became a flood. Sonoran Mexicans, Chileans, Hawaiians and Europeans of all nations sought their fortunes in the mines of the Mother Lode. Entrepreneurs, in moves that were ill-tolerated by fellow miners, imported Chinese or brought slaves to dig for gold.

Leaders of the newly-American California territory debated whether to allow slavery in their state constitution. They decided not to, but did permit slave owners to bring in and out of California slaves they already owned. Free Blacks who made good sent money back to the south to buy freedom for their wives and children and campaigned in California for the right to testify in court, which was won in 1863.

When California changed hands, the Californios suffered. Some, like Martina Castro Lodge, were cheated out of their land and could not protect themselves because they did not speak English. All old grants of ranchos had to be confirmed by American authorities. Often the cash-poor Californios mortgaged themselves to the hilt to pay the legal expenses involved in proving their ownership. In the meantime, squatters settled on the disputed parcels and refused to be budged. By 1852, the county's population had reached 4,939. That same year, two Mexican-Americans were lynched by vigilantes in Santa Cruz.

In these unsettled days, Portuguese immigrants began to arrive. Whaling vessels from New Bedford frequently made stops at the Azores Islands on



**Black workers in the '40s found work at Salz Tannery (Photo by Ansel Adams)**

their way south around the Horn to pick up Portuguese whaling crews. Portuguese males in the Azores were required to submit their names in a lottery for the military draft at age 21, and must post a bond of \$300 if they left the country before that age. Many left on whalers by night without paying.

Attracted by California's rich farmlands, some left ship in California to operate land-based whaling stations on the shores of the Monterey Bay, eventually sending back to the Azores for wives and sweethearts. Immigrants continued to come from the Azores throughout the 19th cen-

tury, some paying for their passage by working as indentured servants in the Hawaiian sugar cane fields. In Santa Cruz, a neighborhood off Mission Street near Trescony was settled by these newcomers and became known as "Portuguese Flat."

At the end of the 1800s, Scandinavians were immigrating to the east coast of the United States and to the harbor town of San Francisco. Many Danes settled near Watsonville, but it took more than one generation for settlers from Norway and Sweden to migrate to Santa Cruz. Pastor Johnson of St. Stephens recalled that his father immigrated in 1913 to join relatives in Sacramento. His parents spoke Swedish at home when they did not want the children to understand.

Fishing families from what is now Yugoslavia also began to come to the county in the 1850s. Some began to operate restaurants, but most went into orchard cultivation in the agricultural areas around Watsonville, where their descendants still live.

By the early 1860s, according to local historian Sandy Lydon, Watsonville had a thriving Black community and a few Black men living in Santa Cruz.

Chinese, too, had come to the Santa Cruz area, imported to do farm labor and to work on the county's railroad lines. Chinese laborers blasted the tunnels for the Pacific Railroad over the hill from San Jose. Many were killed in explosions during the tunnel drilling. A Chinatown sprung up in the neighborhood that

# Cover Story

is now Pacific Avenue near Walnut. In the 1870s, the Chinatown moved to Front Street.

By the time local railroads were completed, Santa Cruz was in a depression. Chinese workers who had settled into the laundry business, truck gardening, working at the powder works on the San Lorenzo River, or hiring out as servants, became scapegoats. A local branch of the statewide Workingmen's Party—made up chiefly of merchants and farmers—called for political reforms and the expulsion of all Chinese.

The powder works' Chinese employees were fired. In 1882, a year after the Congregationalist Church has established a Santa Cruz mission to care for Chinese souls, Congress authorized harsh Chinese exclusion measures. Husbands could not bring their wives to the new land, unless they were of the merchant class. Men who voyaged to China could bring their sons, or fellow villagers posing as sons, but Chinese women could not again freely enter the country until the 1920s. Rural Chinatowns became places of many single men and few families, and dwindled, as Chinese immigrants congregated in larger cities to be safe from arson and lynchings.

The final Santa Cruz Chinatown, located at the end of Bellvue Place, was razed for an urban redevelopment project, after being flooded by the San Lorenzo River in 1955. Only

a handful of Chinese-Americans remained.

German and Italian immigrants also settled in Santa Cruz in the 1870s. Records of the Santa Cruz-based Arion Singing Society, a German-American Club, go back to that time, according to Feliz Guenter, who joined the society in 1914. These immigrants fared relatively well, Guenter said, because most arrived with skills learned in the old country.

German families prospered in the tannery business, but suffered some during World War I, when the loyalty of German-Americans was questioned. Dormant during the war years, the Arion Singing Society resumed its folk songfests once peace was concluded. But after 100 years, the singing has recently ceased, due to lack of new members.

The first Italian immigrants, the Monteverde brothers, arrived from Genoa in 1869. The brothers bought 60 acres on Ocean Street and began truck gardening. As production of vegetables increased, the swelling Italian colony sent vegetable wagons into the city's streets, replacing the rounds of Chinese vegetable peddlars. The Italian families also entered the fishing and restaurant business and started hotels, which by 1885 outnumbered all other hotels in Santa Cruz. Chief among these was John Costella's elegant Garibaldi Villa on Front Street, which was torn down for a redevelopment project in

the 1950s.

By 1892, Japanese immigrants were settling in the south county area. These immigrants began as farm and lumber workers, but quickly established mutual aid societies and began leasing land to grow their own crops. By 1900, Watsonville boasted four Japanese labor clubs, two churches and a Japanese population of 1,280. Their swift economic success was perceived as a threat, and organizations like California's Native Sons of the Golden West—made up mostly of the descendants of white settlers—campaigns against Japanese immigration.

Barred like the Chinese from becoming naturalized citizens, in 1920 the Japanese were forbidden to own land as well. In 1924, a Congressional immigration act cut off immigration from Japan and China altogether.

Under these hardships, Japanese families in Santa Cruz County continued to raise and educate their American-born children. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, their loyalty was challenged and all county residents of Japanese ancestry—whether citizens or not—were interned. Historical documents from the Preston, Arizona internment camp, to which many county residents were sent, detail the efforts of a Japanese-American camp official to reunite a Santa Cruz family.

The husband was sent to a camp in

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**Front Street's Free Market  
was a gathering place for  
the new Santa Cruzans**

New Mexico because he was an officer in a mutual aid society. His wife, with four small children, was sent to Preston. I. Motoki, the official, wrote to white citizens of Santa Cruz and Salinas, asking for someone to vouch for the father's loyalty so that he could rejoin his family. A Santa Cruz man finally provided the requested letter.

Ironically, the 1924 immigration act, which had barred additional Chinese and Japanese from entering

the United States, led to a labor shortage. Filipinos, who were technically American citizens, were recruited for field work in the county. Barred from intermarriage with white Americans, many took wives among Mexican field workers who had come during World War I. Others, who did not have enough money to return to the Philippines, remained single lifelong.

Both groups experienced hostility during the Depression years, when jobs were in short supply. But during World War II, field labor was again in short supply, and many Mexicans migrated to the county.

In the post-war years, Blacks who had served military duty in California would send for their families and settle in Santa Cruz. More Mexicans would enter the country through the government-sponsored *bracero* program.

The university, which opened in the mid-sixties, added many foreign students and Americans of diverse cultural backgrounds to Santa Cruz. Many have stayed.

In recent years, Santa Cruz has played host to Iranian-Americans of the Bahai religion, who are escaping religious persecution under the Khomeini regime, to Korean immigrants who sought American refuge from the repressive Park Chung Hee government. Most recently, to Salvadorans have travelled here like so many before them, searching for a sanctuary. •