

JUNE 14, 1953

Santa Cruz Yesterdays

Sawyer Preston



OUTSTANDING ADMISSION DAY PARADE OF 1888

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Flags and bunting were everywhere as a gaily bedecked Santa Cruz played host to thousands on Admission Day, 1888. First of several statewide celebrations of the day held here by the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, it was a proud occasion in the annals of the community.

Approximately 6000 visitors were in town, nearly every section of the state being represented. The weather was ideal, the mornings warm and afternoons and evenings cool and pleasant. Hotels, boarding houses and restaurants did a rushing business.

Members of the various Parlors represented in the local celebration had begun arriving on Saturday evening September 8. Three trainloads came over the South Pacific Coast mountain narrow gauge, the last train pulling in at 45 minutes past midnight. Via the broad gauge (Watsonville) route came, 15 minutes earlier, a nine-coach train from the east bay area.

Night Festivities

The town was wide awake that night. Whistles blew, bells rang, anvils boomed. Enthusiasm was at

a high pitch. A midnight procession was formed and as it moved down Pacific avenue there was a display of red and blue lights, Roman candles and rockets. At this early hour the streets were crowded and a carnival spirit prevailed. But the big parade was on Monday morning, the 10th.

Long before the hour named for the procession to move, the downtown area was a mass of humanity. Balconies, upper floor windows, even roof-top vantage points were at a premium. The sidewalks were almost impassable, spectators being forced into the street by surging crowds.

Frank Mattison was grand marshal of the grand procession. It numbered seven divisions, which took about 40 minutes to pass a given point. Nearly two miles long, it was loaded with bands and drum corps, drill teams and many other features, with the number of participants reaching for the 3000 mark.

Marching Units

The picture shows part of the second division. In the foreground is a uniformed drum corps followed

by the Flambeau club. Along the line of march this group featured many drills and military evolutions. California Parlor is next, displaying a huge Japanese parasol. Following this is the large banner of the Parlor, carried on the shoulders of 12 members.

Santa Cruz' original town clock and Odd Fellows building is the dominating structure in the background. It was destroyed by fire in 1899, and replaced by the present structure, on the same site.

Grand Arch

In the background, at Cooper street, the decorative arch surmounted by a California grizzly, marks a parade day adjunct of no small importance in those bygone days. This arch stood 32 feet high with a 12-foot flagpole on each pillar. It was 48 feet wide. The span of the arch was 22 feet above the horseshoe tracks. Each pillar was decorated to simulate granite. The balance represented quartz rock.

Just to the right of the arch, at the far corner of Cooper street, rises the tower of the old City bank, a victim of the great fire of a half dozen years later.