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# The story of the Percy Richards family

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Percy Richards was a Maine man who had made his way to California and, in the 1880's, had settled down as an employee of Hihn's Valencia Mill. At socials at the old Valencia Hall he met and fell in love with Carabelle Kastor, daughter of a Valencia pioneer. In the old hall they were married a few years after his arrival.

The newly-weds rented the Lewis Farm, near the junction of the Valencia and Day Valley Roads, and there their daughters Frances and Bertha were born. When the mill was closed down, around 1900, Mr. Richards tried to support his family by farming. Unsatisfied with the farm income, he went to Bakersfield to take advantage of the high wages offered by the new oilfields there, leaving his family in Valencia.

The separation estranged him from his wife, and a divorce ensued. Each later remarried. The former Carabelle Kastor became Mrs. Hoffman, wife of the man who operated Hoffman's Camp, a popular resort in Palo Colorado Canyon, below Carmel. She served as hostess there until a devastating fire destroyed the camp around 1910.



Percy Richards in 1885



Mrs. Emily Kastor, Percy's mother-in-law



A family portrait: Standing: Mrs. Percy Richards and her brother, Wilbur Kastor; seated (left to right): Frances Richards, Bertha Richards and the Gonzalves sisters; man seated at left rear is unidentified.

The two daughters remained in the Kastor home, as both were enrolled in the Valencia District School. The family later took up residence in Aptos, where the girls graduated from the old grammar school on Aptos Wharf Road. Frances later married Robert Hansen, son of Captain Peter Hansen, owner of the Anchor House in Aptos. Bob was a career Navy man, a bandmaster. Both are now deceased. Bertha became the wife of Mervyn Correia, son of a pioneer Capitola family and an Aptos contractor.

The Correias, among the early residents of Rio del Mar, lived for many years in a big home on Baltusrol Drive. When their children had grown and left home, they found the house much too large, so moved to a comfortable cottage in the Live Oak Area, where they live in happy retirement.

Mrs. Correia has many fond memories of old Aptos and of the Valencia District. She recalls the Valencia Hall as the place where she attended her first Sunday School, as well as the site of parties, dances, and numerous weddings. She treasures pictures of her grandfather Kastor's farm

and family, particularly a post-picnic picture with the ladies of the family standing on a gigantic redwood stump. She chuckles at memories of Bob Hansen's fanatic neatness, relating that he always carried a small brush in his pocket to flick off the tiniest bit of dust or lint from his uniform.

She tells with sympathetic amusement of the early-morning arrival of the Hoffman automobile in Aptos the morning after the Carmel fire, with the small staff of Hoffman's Camp in blankets and bathrobes pulled over their night clothes—all they had been able to salvage. Most vividly she recalls her childhood pride in her father as the operator of the gasoline-powered "dinky" that carried passengers and supplies along the now-vanished railroad between the Valencia Mill and Aptos.

Capitola Chamber meets April 6

