

AUG. 15, 1948

Sawyer, Preston

# Santa Cruz Yesterdays

Sunday, August 15, 1948



OLD BRANCIFORTE SCHOOL

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The people of Branciforte, Santa Cruz' east side, carved their own school district out of Santa Cruz District No. 1 in 1860, but had failed to raise money for a building when, in 1868, the territory was taken back into the Santa Cruz district and a \$4,000 special tax

levied, of which half was to go for the Branciforte school.

Trustees F. J. McCann, F. M. Kittredge and Dr. C. L. Anderson found the site on the brow of the hill where the present Santa Cruz hospital stands. For \$310 the big lot owned by the widow of Dominic Snitzler was bought and augmented by a \$60 purchase from Henry Bausch and \$50 worth of land from Joseph Enos. The site, commanding an excellent view, overlooked the valley of the San Lorenzo and other educational institutions on the western (Mission) hill.

## First Teacher

Contract for a one-room building was let to Silas Randall, who erected the first floor part of the rear portion of the building shown in the picture. May Cooper, who had been teaching in the lower floor of Temperance Hall, rented to care for overflow of pupils, was transferred to Branciforte as its first teacher.

Eight years later Joel Butler was hired to enlarge the building and Miss S. Perry from the Beach (Laurel) school was made the second teacher at Branciforte. In 1887

John Williams drew plans for a still bigger plant, which was ready in the spring of '88.

By 1894 the hilltop building had been developed into a two-story, four-room edifice whose front porch and "steeple" faced west, with one side toward Soquel avenue, where several homes and buildings stood along the street. The north side was not far from the embankment which dropped down toward Branciforte creek. The area was developing rapidly. More and more pupils were straining the school's facilities.

## Bonds Voted

To meet the demand for additional schools and improvement of existing equipment, in a growing Santa Cruz, not only at Branciforte, a bond election was held on March 27, 1894. It carried, 530 to 175, providing \$45,000 for educational improvements. Mayor W. T. Jeter, later lieutenant governor under James Budd, and the school trustees, namely O. J. Lincoln (later postmaster), Bart Burke and Dr. P. F. Fagen, were jubilant. For it made possible a new Laurel school, a fine high school at Walnut ave-

nue and California street (burned in 1913), and a substantial four-room addition to Branciforte.

Completed toward the end of the same year, the new part of Branciforte, most prominent in the picture made in 1909, was built in front of and joined to the existing four-room section. Above the porch was the office of Prof. Will T. Forsythe, principal. Above this, the bell tower housed the great bell, fund for which was started by a donation of \$50 from Attorney Bar' Burke, one of the school trustees.

## Building Razed in 1919

In 1915 the present Branciforte school building at Branciforte and Water was built and about 1919 the old building was torn down. The grounds, bought in 1869 for \$420, were offered for sale for \$7,500.

When the building was razed the bell was stored in a shed until

## Santa Cruz Sentinel-News—5

naughty boys on Hallowe'en rolled it down hill into Branciforte creek. Some time later it was recovered. Today it stands on a pedestal in the modern school, viewed by some, unnoticed by others, of the pupils of 1948, whose parents and grandparents were called to studies in the old Branciforte school by its tones

today for the suicide of a mother of two children.

The body of Mrs. Gloria Hastey, 23, was found in the bedroom of her mother's home. She said she fired a shot into her chest with a German rifle. A note said she couldn't live apart from her husband.

The note asked someone to care for 20-months-old Julie Diane and five-months-old Carolyn Joy. She said she couldn't stand the forced separation from her husband, who works in Mon-