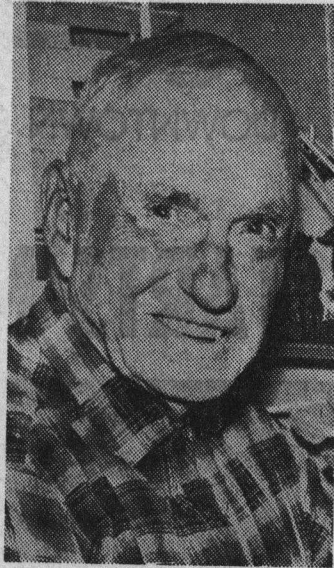


Santa Cruz Oldtimer To Tell His Peers Of Days Gone By

"Things weren't so bad then. We got along all right."

In this way Tom Majors compares the days of the horse and buggy with these of the cosmonaut.

Tom is to be honored by Santa Cruz Oldtimers at their 26th annual dinner-meeting one week from today at noon at Facelli's. Tom won't be a stranger at the gathering. He has attended 25 of them — all but the first one.



Tom Majors

And Tom should know about the days of horse and buggy — if anyone does. The 90-year-old native Santa Cruzan was born June 23, 1875, in a home built in gold rush days on a farm now called "Allegro Heights." He has lived long enough and toiled hard enough to acquire an estate far beyond his early dreams.

It is no longer a secret that a couple of months ago he walked into the office of Harold O. Heiner of Santa Cruz Land Title company, commented that he was thinking of selling his coastside ranch if he could receive a sum well into six figures and was immediately taken up by Heiner.

Contrary to the rumor that he moved into Santa Cruz after selling his home, he retained the portion lying south of the coast road at Laguna, six miles west of Santa Cruz. Here he resides.

And therein lies another tale.

Tom was some years ago given an instrument for witching oil and is capable of demonstrating to anyone interested that it clearly shows the existence of a large pool of "liquid gold" under his kitchen. In the matter of the use of such a tool to find petroleum Mr. Majors doesn't stand alone. One of his distant relatives, a member of the Valencia family who gave a name to a section of country east of Aptos, also made a profession of witching for oil.

But it is not just for Tom's long years of attendance at the Oldtimers' fete that he is being honored. Tom's family history goes back into the very roots of California. Through his maternal grandmother he is a great-great-grandson of Don Joaquin Isidro de Castro who came to Alta California with the de Anza expedition of 1775.

Tom's grandfather, Joseph Ladd Majors, was a native of Tennessee who trapped in the Rocky Mountains before coming west in 1832. While pit-sawing lumber two years later on Corralitos Rancho, Majors met Joaquin Castro, owner of Rancho

San Andres and father of Maria de los Angeles Castro, dark-eyed senorita.

In 1837 Majors married Miss Castro. They lived together long enough to welcome 19 children into their home.

The couple's oldest child, born in 1838, was Joaquin. He became the father of William, Henry, Mary, Joseph, Thomas (Tom) and Kathryn Majors, born in that order. Their mother died when the youngest child was an infant; Tom and his brother Joe went to live with an aunt, Mrs. Theodore Winterhalter.

Tom's "Grandma Majors" never learned to speak English. Once very beautiful, an expert and fearless horsewoman, age and the sorrows attending loss of affluence induced her to become so large a horse couldn't carry her. But she was well-versed in botany; her kitchen became a pharmaceutical laboratory of sorts from whence she dispensed yerba santa, yerba buena and other local plants valued for their medicinal properties.

She lived more than 70 years ago in a home at the site of the colorful ruins of the Majors Grist Mill — which every visiting artist transferred to canvas or paper until the remains of the wheel were dismantled to make way for the home now occupied by Fred McPherson Jr., president and publisher of The Sentinel.

Tom's grandfather was christened Juan Jose Crisos-

tomo in the old Santa Cruz Mission before he married Maria. He had two things in common with his fellow "mountain men" he could neither read or write and he carried his Constitution in his pocket.

Majors Sr. acquired the Rancho Zayante for \$1000 on behalf of his friend, Capt. Isaac Graham, head of the American Riflemen. Majors was elected to represent this area in the Constitutional Convention of 1849, despite his handicap in reading and writing. His testimony was much sought in early day court battles over land titles and boundaries. When Santa Cruz county was formed he became its first treasurer. In 1846, less than 60 days after Commodore Sloat raised the American flag at Monterey, Majors was elected Santa Cruz' first American alcalde.

Tom and his late brother, Joe, acquired the Enright Ranch of 1008 acres for \$50,000 — "a lot of money in those days." They bought it on a \$7000-shoe-string they had saved between them while working as ranch foremen for Joe Enright. When Joe Enright died, his wife, Margaret, decided to sell the ranch. She gave the listing to Harry Towne, Santa Cruz realtor, who promptly looked up Tom and Joe Majors with the suggestion that they buy it.

Hats in hands, the Majors' boys went to William T. Jeter, president of the county bank who 20 years before had served as lieutenant governor of the state. Gov. Jeter listened to their story. Then he asked them how much money they had. They told him of the \$7000.

Gov. Jeter laughed and Joe Majors got up and started for the door. But Tom stood his ground.

"Now just a minute," he said. "Mr. Jeter, as I understand it, you are in the business of making money. We have \$7000 to invest. If we fail, the bank will have the ranch and our \$7000."

Shortly afterward the Majors' brothers took possession of the Enright Ranch. In 1923 Tom and Joe divided it. Joe died about a year ago shortly after selling his share.

Tom hopes to live to be a 100. He should. He enjoys life to the fullest. And he will have a fund of stories of "the days of old" like the above, to tell next Sunday at the Oldtimers' reunion.

CHP To Accept Applications For Smog Device Installation