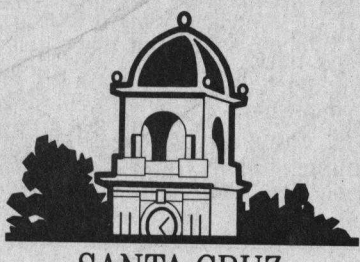


Scotts Valley struggled for cityhood

But later dream as tourist mecca never materialized

BY ROSS ERIC GIBSON
Special to the Mercury News



SANTA CRUZ
Historic Perspective

SOME SCOTTS Valley residents became alarmed in 1961 when the city of Santa Cruz filed to annex Sky-park Airport. They worried even more when a big cemetery was proposed in the center of the valley.

The Scotts Valley Property Owners Association filed a 32-signature petition to make Scotts Valley a city, which halted the Skypark annexation. The association's goal of cityhood was local control to preserve the valley's natural setting, historic and resort amenities.

Otherwise, members feared Santa Cruz would eventually annex the whole valley and lead to urban sprawl. The asso-

ciation felt a Scotts Valley city could be run without local taxes "indefinitely . . . provided we keep expenditures down and don't demand luxuries."

Opposition to cityhood was spearheaded by the Scotts Valley Improvement Association, headed by Charles Maire. Maire said the valley couldn't be annexed to Santa Cruz without a vote of valley residents. He questioned if there was an economic base because the market at Camp Evers was all that passed for a downtown at the

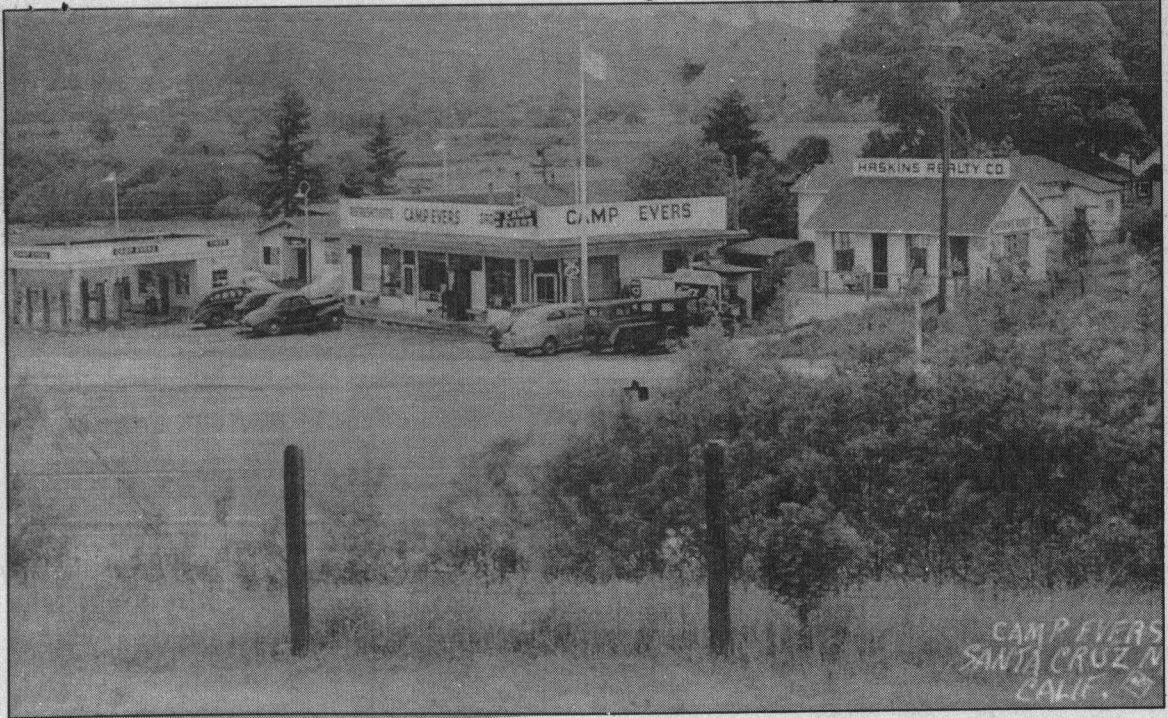
time. "To say we should incorporate to keep the area rural is a choice bit of double talk," he said. "A rural area is a rural area, not an incorporated city."

The community of Pasatiempo was part of the Scotts Valley school district, but vowed to pull out if cityhood passed. A number of valley residents asked to be taken out of the proposed city limits, which were whittled down from 10 miles to 3½ miles.

Once removed from the proposed city limits, many opponents had excluded themselves from the cityhood vote in 1964. Yet they continued to campaign against cityhood, fearing their property would be annexed next.

The city was incorporated by only 25 votes (327 to 302). Opponents contested the election in Superior Court and lost. But during the year's delay, Santa Cruz annexed Skypark for its own municipal airport. County

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ROSS ERIC GIBSON COLLECTION

In 1921, "downtown" Scotts Valley consisted mainly of Camp Evers market and cabins. It was about the same 40 years later when the battle began to incorporate the area into cityhood.

Alpine ambiance gives way to suburbia dooming Scotts Valley dream of tourists

HISTORY

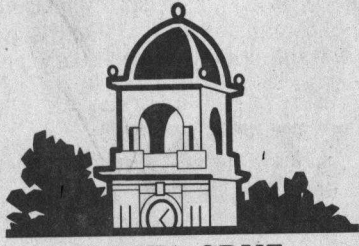
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supervisors said Scotts Valley didn't meet minimum cityhood standards, and wouldn't allow expansion without basic services.

Incorporation came Aug. 2, 1966, celebrated yearly with the Scotts Valley Days history festival.

In 1967, the city traded some property for a farmhouse on five acres, which became city hall. "It may be rustic," then-Mayor Bill Graham said, "but we're not stuck with a big mortgage, like the new county (courthouse)." He assured doubters that Scotts Valley voted for property owner's rights, and didn't want "big city departments" using ordinances like clubs.

Yet the first big issue the city faced was when the 1949 Community Club in the landmark Frapwell Barn became the county's first discotheque in 1963. Conservative neighbors called it Satan's den, whose



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lighting effects "simulated a drug trip," attracting "beatniks," and bands such as those of Janis Joplin, Country Joe McDonald and Led Zeppelin.

In 1967, the city said that its use as a community center was illegal and refused to issue a permit in the protracted dispute. "The (issue) was . . . whether we (had) valid zoning laws," Friend Stone, the first city manager, explained.

In the meantime, city development goals were mapped out. To avoid becoming a bedroom

community, the flat land would be developed in retail and non-polluting light industry, and the hillsides reserved for residential use. Architecture would reflect the historic and alpine characteristics of the valley, especially in the tourist amenities. Proximity to the University of California made schools desirable.

By the late 1970s, some complained that Scotts Valley was supposed to become the Aspen Valley of the coast, not "Daly-City-in-the-Redwoods." Yet alpine ambiance was giving way to roadside suburbia. High-density development, skyscrapers and a 20-square-mile expansion zone were officially recommended as future goals. By the 1980s, all major tourist attractions had closed, and two proposed alpine resorts by Noor Billawala were never built.

Today Scotts Valley is five square miles, and has obtained Skypark Airport for development.