

# Davenport Is A Link To The Past

## Gregory Brothers Run Country Store For Rugged Individuals

(Editor's note: This is another in a series of articles on leading Santa Cruz area citizens which appears weekly in the Sunday edition of The Sentinel.)

By Don Becker

In this county of sharp and pleasant contrasts, Davenport, population 300, elevation 90', stands as a quaint link with the past and a questionable part of the future.

One day, Davenport and environs, might become the industrial center of the county. Then again, but more unlikely, it might become a ghost town.

Blanketed with a fine white dust which emanates from the giant Pacific Cement and Aggregates plant and set near the rocky, rugged shoreline of the Pacific, Davenport is hardly an imposing sight.

It's climate is fierce. Winds blow hard and continually off the ocean. And when the wind stops, there is the fog. Unprotected like Santa Cruz, Davenport has the worst of it.

"This is the place where tourists usually stop and ask: 'Where the hell are we,'" jokes Francis Gregory, who with his brother Alvin, jointly run Davenport's "Country store" along with a gas station. "Most of them are happy to hear Santa Cruz is only 10 miles away," he says.

"It takes a hardy individual to live here," claims Alvin, who has lived in Davenport all his life save for 11 years at sea with the merchant marine.

Thursday we made the 10 mile trek up the coast to see the Gregory brothers and get a prospectus on the Davenport future. Francis is the chief of the volunteer fire

department, and Alvin is a former chairman of the county board of supervisors. Both have been active in Davenport affairs.

Both were working at the "country store" when we arrived. Francis, the younger of the two brothers, said they call it the "country store" rather than a general store because the variety of merchandise is too great to simply call it a general store.

Hardy-looking people wandered in and out of the store. Everybody seemed to know everyone else and no one was in a hurry.

Over the lunch counter stands a sign that reads: "Limit two servings of beer or wine per customer."

"I like it here," says Alvin. "It's rugged. It makes living interesting. You can't take anything for granted."

For the future, Alvin opined that Davenport would probably be one of the last places to be hit by the growth boom which is sweeping this part of the state.

He noted that the dust from the cement plant was a problem as was the fact little land in the area is for sale. Most of it, he pointed out, is owned by big companies like the Coast Dairies and Land company and the land further south of Davenport is in agricultural use and owners have given no inkling they wish to sell.

Few home sites along the coast would be available until they start splitting the property, he said.

Francis said he thought perhaps the construction of the

Campbell Soups plant 15 miles north of Davenport might be the start.

"Property here is certainly cheaper than over in the Santa Clara valley. The problem is to get the people to sell," said Francis.

Davenport is the last link in a Southern Pacific railway line which runs to San Francisco. Water could easily be developed and motor transportation should be facilitated greatly by the improvement of the ocean shore highway which runs right down the main street of Davenport. From an industrial standpoint, the area has possibilities.

Both Gregory brothers feel that for the next few years, anyway, Davenport will not see any great changes. This won't be anything new. The town has stayed relatively the same since the Santa Cruz Portland Cement company opened its plant in 1906.

Meanwhile, the Gregory brothers are more concerned with matters closer at hand. Running their combination store and gas station is a rugged grind. Both put in 12 hours a day with only one day off a week.

Both are entrenched in local matters like keeping the volunteer fire department on its feet; building a new fire house and answering countless questions from passing motorists.

"We received a call the other day from some guy who wanted to know if we'd seen anyone with a mustache," laughed Alvin. "We get a lot of screwy calls and questions."

As gas station attendants, providing information is part of the job, and the quiet talking, pleasant Gregory brothers do it with a smile.

Though small, Davenport is the spot many tourists, fishermen and hunters call for a variety of reasons. Fishermen like to stop there because of the hardy, "old days" appearance of the town. You sense the feeling of being away from it all in Davenport.

Others want to know the condition of the ocean shore highway and still others want to find out about boat mishaps and the like which invariably seem to happen around the rough Davenport area shoreline.

Like any small town, Davenport has its community activities. Hub for these activities, strangely enough, is the volunteer fire department. The department is always doing something — raising money, buying a new truck, making a rescue, putting out a fire, gathering socially for a dance, etc. Right now, the department is putting the finishing touches on the fire house which has been built by the volunteers.

Probably the fire house will develop into kind of a combination



Alvin and Francis Gregory

move to town.

Alvin is presently building the first new house built in the community in the past seven years. The last one was built by his father, A. J. Gregory.

"I thought about building in Santa Cruz," said Alvin, "But I figured there would be too much running around. I can get more work done by staying here."

In years past, Alvin has done a lot of running around. While serving eight years on the board of supervisors, he was almost a daily commuter to Santa Cruz. In 1954 he decided

ily man."

Alvin married Crisanthe Demos, a Davenport girl, in 1940. They have two children, Leon, 16, and Elinor, 10.

During the war, Alvin served in the south Pacific and was on hand to see the parade of Japanese officers just before they formally surrendered to General MacArthur.

He was born and raised in Davenport, graduating from Santa Cruz high in 1933. For the next 11 years, the sea was his life. After traveling several times around the world, he came back in Davenport in 1944. In

more time for fishing and hunting in the future, would like to see Davenport grow so he can hire more help.

**TYPES**  
of  
**ALL**  
**Modern Fixtures**  
**HOQUE'S**  
**FIXTURE HOUSE**  
1634 Seabright — GA 3-2296



**IF YOU NEED**  
(but think you can't afford)  
**\$10,000**  
**MORE LIFE INSURANCE**

See  
**LAWRENCE J. VIOLANTE**

NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

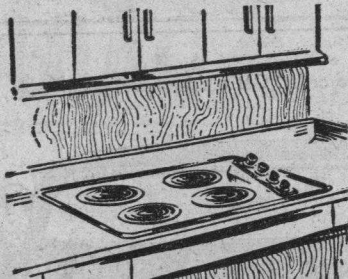
**SPEC**



city hall, civic auditorium and social hall.

Most of the people in Davenport have lived there for a long time. Seldom does a new family

# WES



not to run because he was taking too much time away from the business in Davenport.

Today, Alvin, like Francis, is settled down to raising his family and running the gas station.

Were he so inclined, he could head back to sea. He is a graduate of the California Maritime academy, and holds master's papers. During the war, he was a skipper aboard a maritime vessel. He gave up the sea after the war because it was "no life for a fam-

## Klein To Speak At Conference

City Manager Robert N. Klein is scheduled to speak before the Pacific Southwest conference of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials in Santa Barbara on Tuesday afternoon.

1946 he was elected as supervisor for the Seaside district and re-elected in 1950. During the first half of his second term, he was chairman of the board.

Younger brother Francis once held the distinction of being one of the youngest fire chiefs in the country. He was 19 in 1940 when he was first elected to captain the Davenport force.

Francis didn't hold his position long, however, he joined the air force in 1942, served in the European theater.

Like Alvin, Francis was raised in Davenport and after the war settled down to raise his family and run the family store. Francis married Hazel Vita, a McCloud girl, and they now have three children, Dennis, 10, Kenneth, 8 and Joyce, 4.

Francis has his old job back as fire chief and he seems happy with things. He hopes he'll have