

Leask's Buys Block For Expansion

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On June 22, 1892, a couple of would-be merchants advertised in The Sentinel:

"We have come here to stay and propose to sell goods not by hook or crook but so as to satisfy our customers and establish a business."

The store offered, among other things, the celebrated H & S corsets for \$1, \$1.50 and \$2, with "extra long waists a special feature."

Ladies jersey ribbed vests could be bought there for from 25 cents to \$1.50, while dress yardage was sold for as little as 5 cents per yard.

The store was at 100 Pacific Avenue. It was called The Seaside Store. Owners named in the ads of that day were "Leask and Johnston."

And establish a business they did,

offering a variety of merchandise in those days at prices so attractive that people came to the city by train "all the way from Boulder Creek" to snatch up bargains.

So today, 85 years later, still doing business at the same location, Leask's is having to expand again.

Expansion plans were announced Friday by Sam Leask III, managing partner of one of the oldest family-owned businesses in the county.

To effect this latest in a long series of needed expansions, Leask's has bought all the buildings along Pacific Avenue between the present store and Locust Street.

Some \$900,000 will be spent on the total project, which will include integrating the interior of the present World Savings building into the sales and display area of the store.

Leask said Friday that the ex-

pansion plans have been in development for over a year but that everything was conditioned upon the transfer of the savings and loan association offices to a new building at the head of the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall.

Tentative plans are to get moving on the project as soon as those offices are transferred.

Did you know that the current store grew to its present size in quite the same sort of expansion process?

The stationary store and loading zone, along with executive offices above, are housed in a building that served for years as a city fire station.

When the time for expansion into that building came in 1938, the company undertook quite the same sort of remodeling and architectural tie-in job it plans to undertake with the World Savings building immediately next door.

The other two buildings between World Savings and the corner "will be leased for the foreseeable future to Pacific Pantries and Apothecaries," Leask said.

That company is presently remodeling the corner building (the former Melvin's Drug Store) for expansion of its own merchandising and displays.

One of the foremost store designers of today, Chaix and Johnson of Los Angeles, has designed the expansion and a complete remodeling of the main floor of today's store, Leask said.

Some 9,500 square feet of additional space will be acquired by incorporation of the two floors of the World Savings building into today's 60,000 square-foot store area, Leask said.

Planned for the first floor of the acquired World Savings building is a

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men's shop that will offer broadly expanded lines of men's clothes and furnishings.

On the second floor there'll be expanded boys' and girls' shops.

Then on the present store's main floor there will be a complete remodeling and refixturing, expansion of the sportswear, accessory, hosiery, cosmetics departments.

Featured throughout will be new carpeting and a new decor.

"We'll expand our merchandise presentations in all areas," Leask said.

Leask said there is still a lot of the original building left in the store founded by his grandfather, Samuel Leask and Johnston in 1892.

"My grandfather bought out Johnston in 1896," he said, and in 1906 we put up the present building here on

Pacific Avenue and up Church Street a way. We had a remodeling in 1926 and we had a complete remodeling in 1945-46-47. We picked up the Insull Building between the 1906 construction and the old fire house, we got another addition about six years ago when we bought the Locust Street property for our home furnishings store.

This latter property was acquired from the McPherson family and used to house The Sentinel offices and printing plant.

The newest expansion "is in effect the completion of the remodeling job begun at that time," Leask said on Friday.

Leask said the expansion work will begin "the minute we can get into the building next door, we hope the first week of June."

Hope is to complete the project by

autumn.

The expansion comes at only the second time in the store's history when three generations of the Leask family are involved in its operation: Leask's father, Samuel Leask Jr. and his son, Samuel Leask IV. Also involved in the family ownership are Haswell T. Leask and Sherwood R. Leask, brothers of Samuel Leask Jr.

Samuel Leask, store founder, was born in Scotland in 1861, became a full-fledged draper clerk earning about \$175 per year in London at age 18, and embarked for the U.S. May 23, 1883 to better his lot here. He came West by way of Boston, New York and Memphis and eventually got a job with the Charles Ford Co. in Watsonville at \$100 per month. That was in 1885. He was married to Clara Johnson in 1892, the year he founded the Seaside Store, and

they were married for over 60 years.

Leask died in 1964 at the age of 103. Edmund G. Brown, then California's governor, said in a letter to Samuel Leask Jr.: "You can well be proud of his magnificent contributions to the citizens of his community and to the State of California."

Samuel Leask III is a former councilman and mayor of the City of Santa Cruz and has participated in numerous projects to benefit the community.

The Santa Cruz store operates two branches in the Rancho Del Mar Shopping Center in Aptos: the Mid-County Branch and the Rancho Corral Branch.

And oh, yes, the company's purpose today remains as it was announced on June 22, 1892:

"We have come to say and propose to sell goods not by hook or crook but so as to satisfy our customers..."

Pacific Garden Mall 1967-1979



While Leask's was putting up its new store on Pacific Avenue and Church Street, the company continued to sell goods of all kinds in this temporary shore on Walnut Street.

Yes, people came and bought even though the surroundings were less elegant than pioneer Samuel Leask liked them to be.



Seaside Store, Santa Cruz, California.

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This imposing store was put up by Samuel Leask in 1906 to house an ever-growing business done on the same site beginning in June, 1892. Pacific Avenue and Church

Street were a bit different then, but crowds came to the store to get the quality goods that the Scotsman took pride in selling at low prices.