

1984: Taking a look back on Susan B. Anthony

History
EDITOR'S NOTE: The Sentinel is celebrating its 150th year by reaching into our archives to republish some of the noteworthy stories of the past. The following ran Dec. 30, 1984. It looks back on the women's rights pioneer Susan B. Anthony and her connection to Santa Cruz County.

By **MARGARET KOCH**
 SENTINEL CORRESPONDENT

More than 100 years ago there was a handful of women who fought publicly for women's rights. They weren't afraid to rock the boat instead of the cradle, in that day of whalebone cor-

sets and skirts that swept the floor. Women were expected to marry young, bear children, put their brains in neutral and keep the home fires burning. Many did just that. But there were always a few rebels, and Susan Brownell Anthony was one of them.

Susan B. Anthony, as she is better known today, had a firm jaw, a determined look in her eyes and some unpopular ideas in her head. She labored for more than 50 years in avant garde causes (avant garde in that day) to which she dedicated her life.

She had close relatives in Santa Cruz County, a cousin Asa Anthony in particular, whom she visited often. And

on August 29, 1896, she lectured at the Watsonville Opera House on "Women's Suffrage."

But Susan had more than one string to her fiddle. In 1854-55 she had toured every county in New York State, holding conventions as she went, in the cause of suffrage. By 1860 she had raised such a ruckus that the New York legislature passed an act giving married women the right to keep their earnings, which had previously, by law, gone into their husband's pockets. The same act allowed women the guardianship of their children.

Susan understandably was not the most popular woman of her day and

3-19-08
 age. She never married — she was too busy fighting all the injustices she saw so clearly. In 1860 she got out a petition; in favor of omitting the word "male" from the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. By that time many of the males in the United States were either amused by her efforts or having serious second thoughts about her lofty brain and eloquent tongue. Many women were awed by her, proud of what she was trying to do. And of course, there were the others ... one can almost imagine the snide remarks of a few:

See **ANTHONY** on **PAGE A13**

Anthony

Continued from Page A9

"Well, you know, Susan never married. She's an old maid — and old maids have to have something to keep them busy" ... etc.

Susan was born February 15, 1820, in South Adams, Mass. to Quaker parents who moved to New York State in 1846. She taught school, became involved in the temperance and anti-slavery movements, but her main interest was equal rights for women. It was a campaign she headed until

she died. Most of the things she fought for are taken for granted today.

In Susan's honor, the Susan B. Anthony dollar was struck, but unfortunately it turned out to be a highly unpopular coin. It was easily confused with the 25 cent piece; people spent dollars when they should have been spending quarters.

Somehow, that almost seems to follow the pattern Susan established in her lifetime. She was an ordinary looking woman until the chips were down and she opened her mouth and began to speak. A rare breed indeed.