

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
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Mister Old Timer of 1976

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Local history has always interested Darrell Cardiff, mainly because his great-grandparents were involved in it, which seems a natural enough reason.

Now Darrell himself is looked upon as one of the city's "old timers," although he may not exactly feel that way.

He was just officially named Santa Cruz Old Timer of the Year by the Santa Cruz Old Timers Club which meets once a year to bestow that honor, reminisce, and bend an elbow or two in toasts to the good old days.

Along with the title and the honor, the club presented Darrell with a plaque and a framed piece of original art work that depicts his many and varied activities over the years.

Seventy-five years, to be exact.

"Don't say I'm 75," Darrell protested. "Say three score and 15."

So he is facing the passing of the years, but he doesn't like to see it in round numbers.

During his "three score and 15," Darrell has taken an active part in Boy Scouting, civic affairs, in PTA, the Santa Cruz High Alumni Association, in juvenile delinquency prevention work, and in state pest control activities.

That was his business — local pest control, from which he is now retired.

Darrell has always had an eye to the future although his roots are in the past.

That family past interests him, too, and he has made an extensive collection of family history.

One set of great-grandparents came to California by covered wagon in 1864 — and 64 years later great-grandson Darrell was flying

a plane. That's how rapidly things can change in a short space of years.

Those were his paternal great-grandparents, Thomas and Henrietta Pryce, who jolted west in their wagon and settled on the East side of the San Lorenzo River between the Water Street bridge and the present Highway 1 bridge.

They had 21 acres there on which they planted apples.

In 1964 Darrell went to see if any of the old apple trees survived, and found a few still bearing. There is a Pryce Street in the area also, which was named for the family.

On the other side, his maternal great-grandfather Evan Russell came to Santa Cruz in 1852 via sailing ships and the Isthmus of Panama.

Russell settled in the River Street area and had a run-in with Isaac Graham, rugged individualist pioneer, who threatened to

cut his throat over a right-of-way, according to Darrell.

Darrell was born to Elsa and Robert Cardiff in the old Alta Building on Pacific Avenue on October 17, 1901. He went to a private school in San Diego until he was 16, then underwent executive training at the old City of Paris department store in San Francisco.

The City of Paris was THE fashionable place to trade in those days. Lady customers were mainly from the elite of society. When they went shopping they wore gowns from Paris and velvet hats with ostrich plumes, and their coachmen helped them in and out of their horse-drawn vehicles.

However, a career in merchandising didn't appeal to Darrell. He turned instead to the air, went into aviation and operated a small plane business from 1928 to 1934 in Bakersfield.

He also got married in 1931 on his birthday.

From 1944 to 1946 Darrell trained recruits at Camp McQuaide, but he was also established in his pest control business and was taking an interest in Boy Scout work. With the birth of two sons, Charles and Robert, his interest in Scouting grew. He served as a scoutmaster from 1938 to 1968 and as a scout commissioner from 1968 to the present.

At the Old Timers' gathering, son Charles Cardiff presented Darrell with two fine, enlarged photographs of himself, and son Dr. Robert Cardiff spoke, thanking the group for the honors shown his father.

A "Darrell Cardiff Day" banner made by Bob Ebert was hoisted into place at the Elks Clubhouse where the event took place, and it was truly Darrell's day.



G. Darrell Cardiff with his plaque and framed version of his "life story."