

# UCSC event marks Harry Cowell's 150th birthday

History

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SANTA CRUZ—In the 19th century Henry Cowell built his lime business in Santa Cruz County, blasting holes in the ground and chopping down redwoods to fuel the lime kilns.

Just as much of that land today is preserved and home to second-growth redwoods, so too has the Cowell family legacy been reshaped over time, with picturesque spots such as Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park and Cowell Beach as present-day reminders of the family's 20th century contributions.

On Saturday, the old Cowell family house, now the UCSC Women's Center, will host a celebration of that legacy by honoring the 150th anniversary of the birth of Cowell's son, Samuel Henry "Harry" Cowell.

Family patriarch Henry Cowell arrived in Santa Cruz in 1865. Through manufac-

## IF YOU GO

150TH BIRTHDAY PARTY  
FOR HARRY COWELL

**WHAT:** A celebration of the Cowell family legacy, with refreshments, birthday cake, a short talk on the Cowell family history in Santa Cruz and optional tour of the lime kilns.

**WHEN:** 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday

**WHERE:** Women's Center, UC Santa Cruz

**COST:** Free

**INFORMATION:** RSVP by Wednesday at 459-1254, or [community.ucsc.edu/cowell150](http://community.ucsc.edu/cowell150)

turing lime at his Santa Cruz ranch, where UCSC stands now, as well as other endeavors.

SEE COWELL ON B6



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/UCSC MCHENRY LIBRARY

Samuel Henry 'Harry' Cowell is seen in a picture dated around 1910.

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EXTRA

## COWELL

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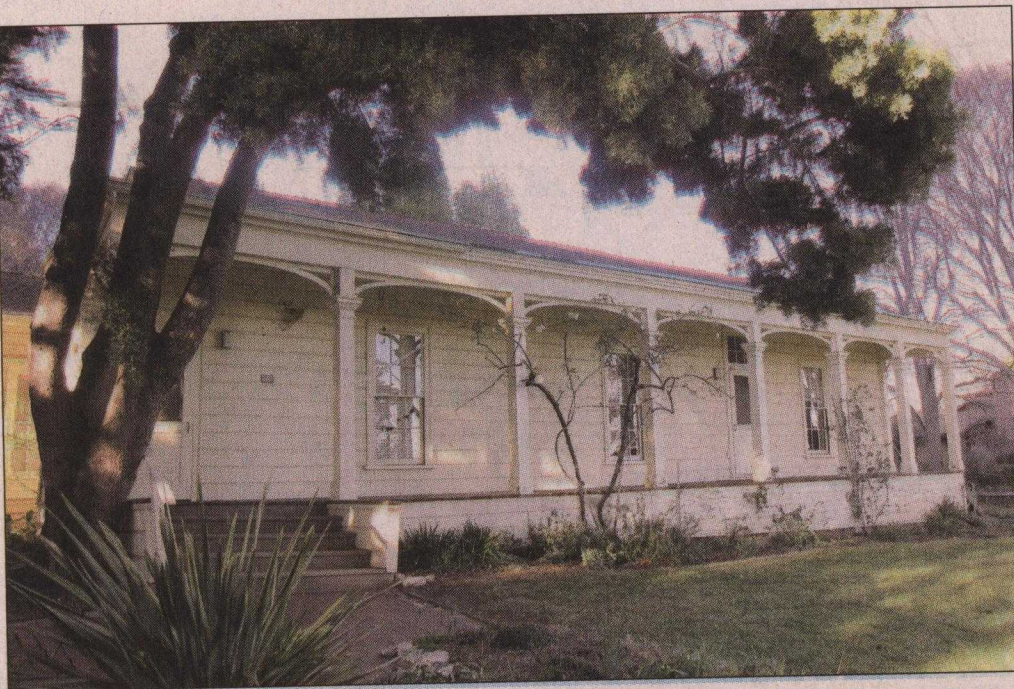
ors, he amassed a fortune.

"Henry Cowell was a rather hard-nosed businessman who set out to become the lime baron of California," said historian Frank Perry, who will lead a tour at the celebration. "He tried to either buy out or crush his competitors in the lime business. He was always involved in lawsuits of one kind or another, so he was quite controversial and not always popular."

Today, the quarries, lime kilns and cluster of historic buildings on campus are tangible relics of this once lucrative operation. While Henry Cowell was a controversial figure in the community, his children shaped the family legacy in their own way after Henry's death in 1903.

The eldest son, Earnest, set up a scholarship at Santa Cruz High School the year his father died. A year later, he donated money to the local library, according to Perry.

Earnest died in 1911, and Harry Cowell took over. Harry Cowell donated the land that would become Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park,



On Saturday the original Cowell family home, now the UCSC Women's Center, will host Harry Cowell's 150th birthday celebration. The modest structure, tucked away near the main campus entrance, was the original Cowell family home in the mid-19th century.

UCSC/CONTRIBUTED  
PHOTO

and after his death in 1955 as the sole remaining heir, the bulk of his assets went to the philanthropic organization bearing his name, the S.H. Cowell Foundation.

The foundation has donated \$4 million to UC Santa Cruz over the past 45 years, and also contributed

to the construction and naming of UCSC's first college and the Cowell Student Health Center.

"The Cowell legacy is not one so much of growth, but one of lack of growth," Perry said. "Because a lot of the Cowell lands were locked up as private, it kept them from being

subdivided and developed. So, they were protected until the mid-1900s."

The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Cowell Lime Works Historic District, which is restoring some of the old buildings on the UCSC campus.