



Warren Littlefield Historical Collection

Malio "Chief Roxas" Stagnaro at dedication to Henry Cowell State Park.

It was an event of some importance

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story was written by the late Warren "Skip" Littlefield, a longtime friend of Malio Stagnaro, the well-known Santa Cruz waterfront figure who died Wednesday at the age of 85. Littlefield long chronicled the doings of the Santa Cruz waterfront, and continued to write up until the time of his death last June.

By SKIP LITTLEFIELD

THE DEDICATION of Henry Cowell Redwood Park was an event of some importance 30 years ago at Felton.

Five thousand people gathered for this occasion. It marked the last scheduled run of a passenger train from Santa Cruz to the Big Trees.

In attendance were state dignitaries, from the governor to the representatives of Samuel Henry Cowell.

Theme for the dedication was the "Passing Parade of Santa Cruz County" history. Musical background was provided by the Fort Ord Band, the Watsonville Band and the noted organist Korla Pandit.

Twenty-seven characters, all in costume, and all on horseback, graced the parade grounds. From Don Gaspar De Portola to Theodore Roosevelt, they individually rode by the reviewing bleachers, receiving plaudits of the crowd.

Among the personages portrayed was that of Chief Roxas, the Santa Cruz mountain Indian

who lived to be 123 years old.

Proudly astride the hurricane deck of Delos Wilder's quarter horse, looking like Crazy Horse at the Little Big Horn, and waving an old 45-70 Winchester rifle, was Chief Roxas in the person of Malio Stagnaro.

This was the first time the Wilder horse ever had an Indian on its back.

It was also the first time that this Latin Indian had ever been on the back of a horse.

The Fort Ord band struck up the "Death of Custer." The musical fireworks spooked the horse and scared the Indian.

Rearing up on hind legs, the frightened animal went into reverse gear.

Five thousand people gasped.

The band was silenced.

Even a stray dog ceased to bark.

Then, out of this primeval solitude, a loud familiar voice was heard talking to the horse.

"You dumb bastard — you're lousing up my act!"