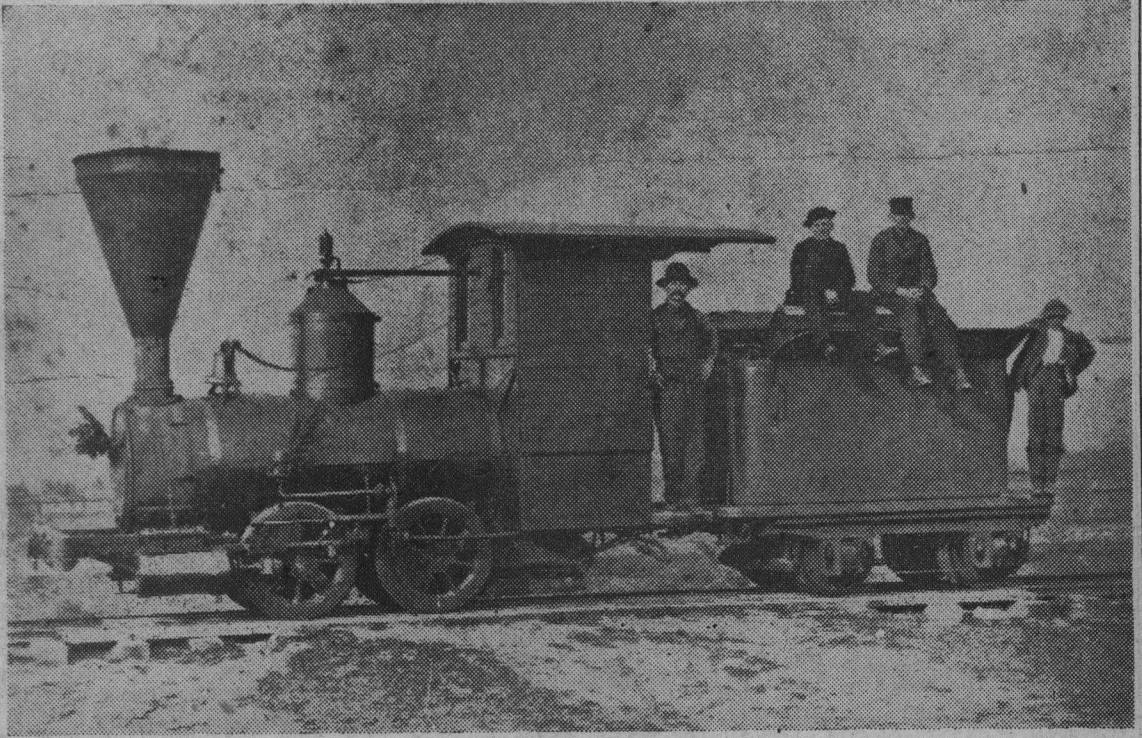


OCT. 23, 1949

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



"BETSY JANE"—FIRST S. C. LOCOMOTIVE

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The first railroad locomotive to appear in Santa Cruz was the little Betsy Jane, which ignominiously arrived, horse drawn, over the county road from Watsonville in October, 1874.

Titus Hale, with the financial backing of F. A. Hihn and a group of other Santa Cruzans, had already begun construction of the Santa Cruz & Watsonville railroad and had laid rails from Santa Cruz beachfront and San Lorenzo river to Woods Lagoon when the little 5-ton narrow gauge engine-on-wheels arrived. It was carefully placed on the rails and took up its duties as construction locomotive, hauling materials and occasional excursion trains. Its hauling power was some 50 tons.

The Betsy Jane had been designed by Francis M. Becker, a me-

chanically minded native of Baden who had been a painter and frescoer in Santa Cruz for five years.

The stubby, pilotless engine was built in San Francisco, but the weekly Sentinel gave credit for its design to Becker, the German immigrant who had two years before married Matilda Dreher.

The Santa Cruz and Felton railroad began operation with its two narrow gauge engines on October 9, 1875, seven months before the rail line to Watsonville was completed, but to the Betsy Jane went the distinction of being the first locomotive here. It had been transported over the newly laid rails of the Southern Pacific to Watsonville.

The Betsy Jane was joined in

1876 by the Jupiter. Both little locomotives hauled trains between the two towns of the county until 1884 when the Southern Pacific took over the line and broadgauged it. The Betsy Jane was put to work on construction of the Aptos-Loma Prieta logging railroad.

A veteran locomotive engineer of Santa Cruz points out the fact that in the picture the side-rods of the wheels are disconnected—the counterbalances not being in conjunction. Also the side of the cab is boarded. These points plus decorative bouquets noticeable in a few places, might indicate that "Betsy Jane" had just arrived here for duty when she posed for the cameraman.