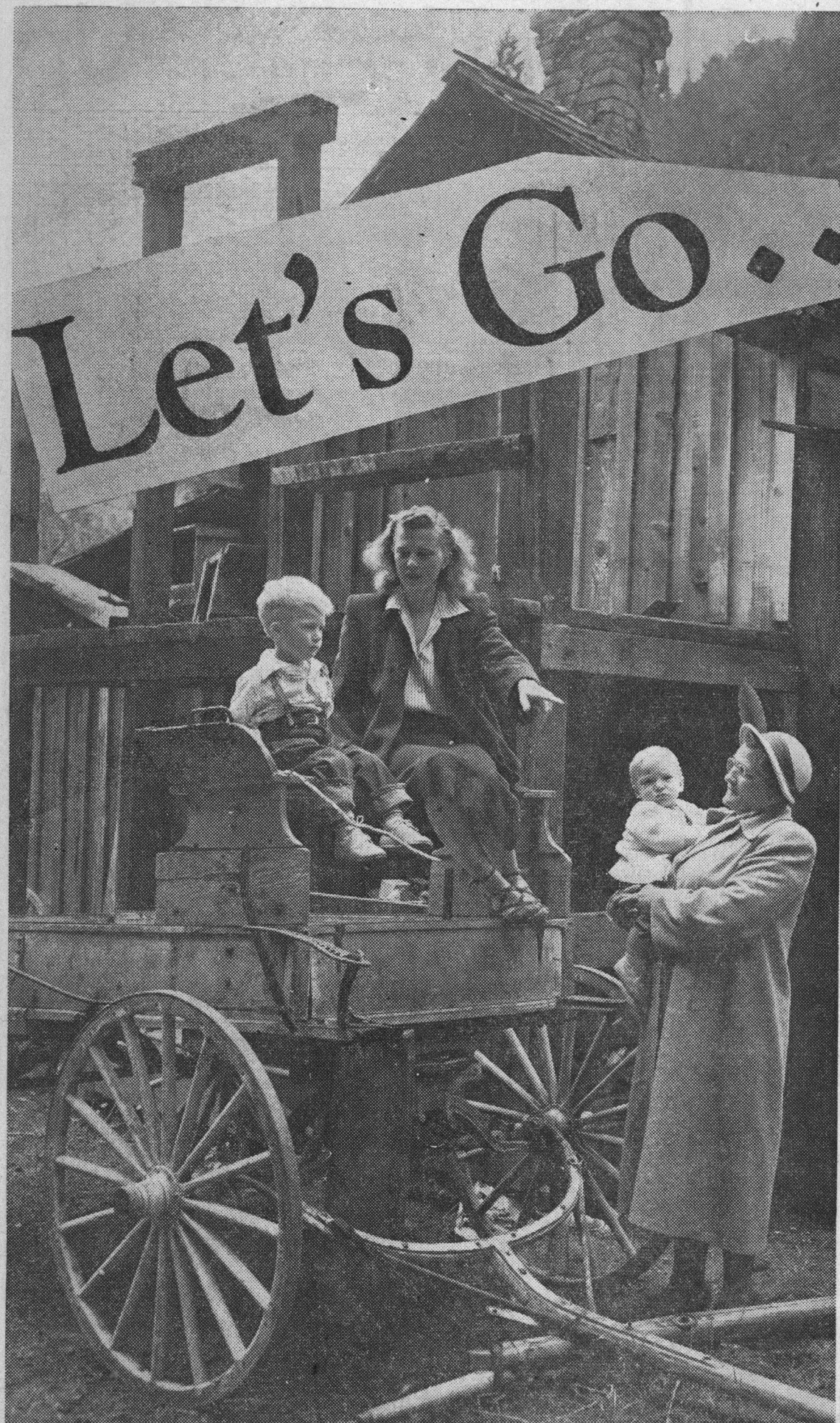


To The Village Which Built A City



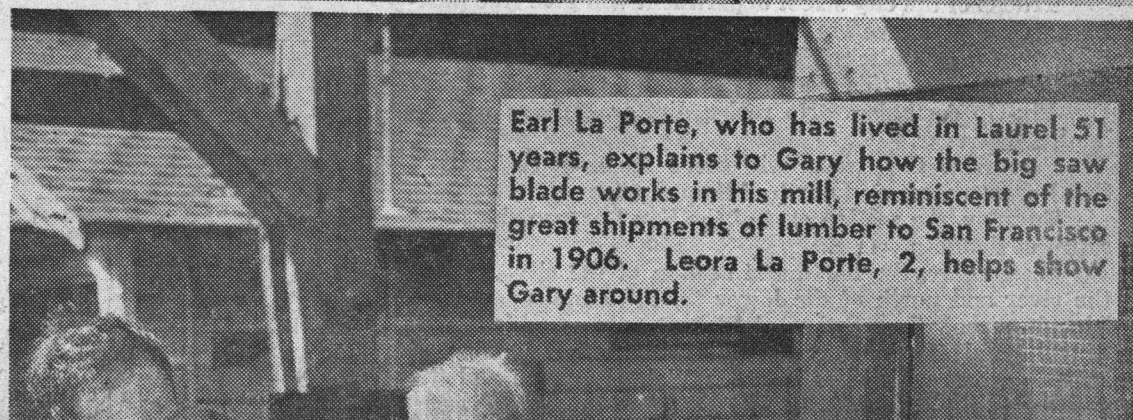
In a game of make-believe, Mrs. Earl Kaupp helps her 2½-year-old son, Gary,



Dave Henderson shows the Santa Cruzans some of the curios in front of the 1920 addition to the store once operated by George Napier, 83. The Kaupps reside at 2022 Brommer, Mrs. Peterson at 1822 Brommer.

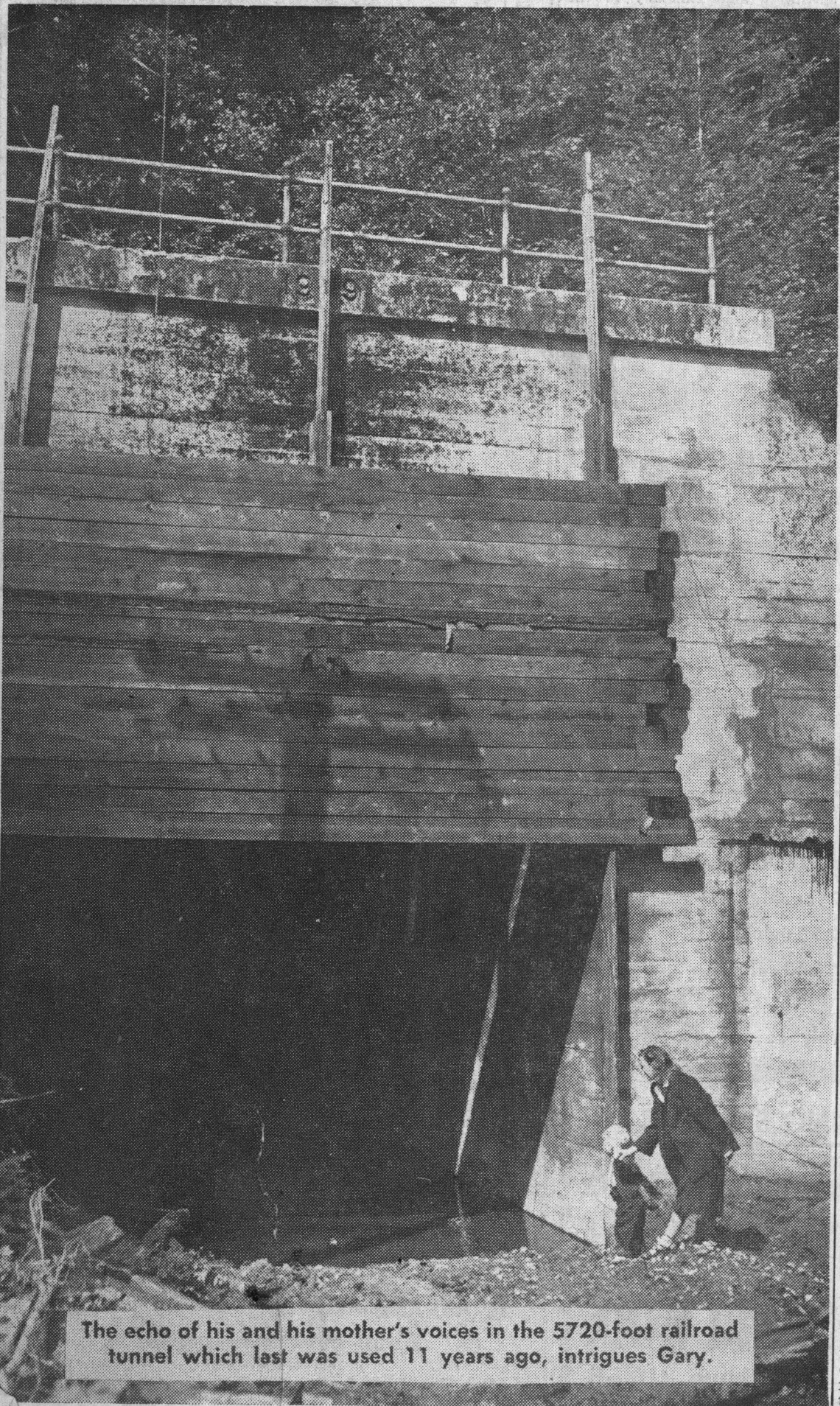


At the Berry Place, Mrs. Maria Sofianic, who came to the United States two years ago from a displaced persons camp in Europe, shows Mrs. Peterson some of the 600 chickens she is raising in newly-constructed, elevated pens.



Earl La Porte, who has lived in Laurel 51 years, explains to Gary how the big saw blade works in his mill, reminiscent of the great shipments of lumber to San Francisco in 1906. Leora La Porte, 2, helps show Gary around.

Imagine horses are pulling this old spring wagon at the Ahlen middle children's camp at Laurel. Gary's nine-month-old brother, Mark, and his grandmother, Mrs. Morris A. Peterson, tell him they are waiting for a ride.



The echo of his and his mother's voices in the 5720-foot railroad tunnel which last was used 11 years ago, intrigues Gary.

Laurel In Heart Of Mountains, Is Proud Of Past Achievements And Present Day Improvements

Once upon a time a little village helped a great crippled city rise like a phoenix from the ashes of disaster.

The little village is Laurel, 13 miles north of Santa Cruz in the heart of the Santa Cruz mountains.

The great city it helped to rebuild is San Francisco, to whom Laurel shipped carload after carload of lumber following the great earthquake and fire of 1906.

For many years life in Laurel was geared to the tempo of the great saws which transformed the mighty redwoods into lumber. Now Laurel is a busy place where farmers tend their mountain-side orchards and fields, where chickens, goats and cattle thrive, where the beat of hammers rings through the trees as new homes are erected and quaint old buildings are repaired and improved.

For old people Laurel holds a solid feeling of comfort.

For young people Laurel is an opportunity land, where nearly anything will grow and where the peace and quiet of the mountains is only two or three miles from high-speed travel arteries to large centers of population and metropolitan conveniences.

For children Laurel is like a story, fascinating and breath-taking with material for exploration. The youngsters of the approximately 25 families who reside in Laurel and the immediate vicinity never lose interest in the old buildings, the great railroad tunnels through which locomotives still were steaming a dozen years ago, the traces of logging activities nearly a century old, the swift running streams and the forests of the mountain-sides.

And quick to capture the adventuresome spirit engendered by the little village are the visitors who come every summer, among them being more than 100 youngsters who vacation with relatives or at the boys and girls camp maintained a quarter of a mile from the Laurel postoffice.

Laurel can be reached by way of the Santa Cruz-Los Gatos highway (No. 17), the Laurel turnoff to the east being about 10 miles north of Santa Cruz.

From the highway, where many motorists pause for a magnificent view of the canyon made by the west branch of Soquel creek and by Laurel creek, the Laurel road twists down the mountain-side nearly three miles to the center of the little village. Madrone trees, with their lily-of-the-valley blossoms more profuse than in many years, brighten the slopes on which second growth redwoods and other evergreens stand straight and slim and close together. Ferns send up their curling fronds at the road's edge. Wild lilacs mix their sweet fragrance with the spicy odor of the evergreens. Deer often are

seen drinking at the streams which are favorite haunts for trout fishermen.

Another way to Laurel is by way of the old San Jose road out of Soquel, the Laurel Glen road to Laurel, branching off to the west about 10 miles north of Soquel. This way equals Highway 17 in scenery but is not built for as rapid travel. By way of Schulties, Morrell, Comstock, Hall and Miller roads motorists can reach Laurel from the Summit road on which Woodwardia, Wrights and Burrell are located.

Logging in the Laurel area, except for timber cutting for early settlers cabins, began several years after the industry had reached its peak in the Soquel area and in the San Lorenzo valley.

But Laurel was recognized as an attractive place to live nearly a century ago.

As an indication that there were several residents in the area more than 80 years ago, records in the office of County School Superintendent Edith E. Fikes show that the land for the Laurel school site was granted to the district in 1868.

Among the early settlers were the Dollar family. Sam Dollar, who for many years ran the historic Dollar store on the Zayante just north of Mount Hermon, was born in Laurel in 1881.

The railroad came to Laurel in 1879, across the mountains from Alameda to Santa Cruz, the first train of the South Pacific Coast line steaming over the precarious trestles, along rocky ledges and through great tunnels on May 8, 1880.

Laurel is situated between two tunnels over a mile long—one north of Laurel through the summit of the Santa Cruz mountains and the other almost due west through the ridge between Laurel and Glenwood.

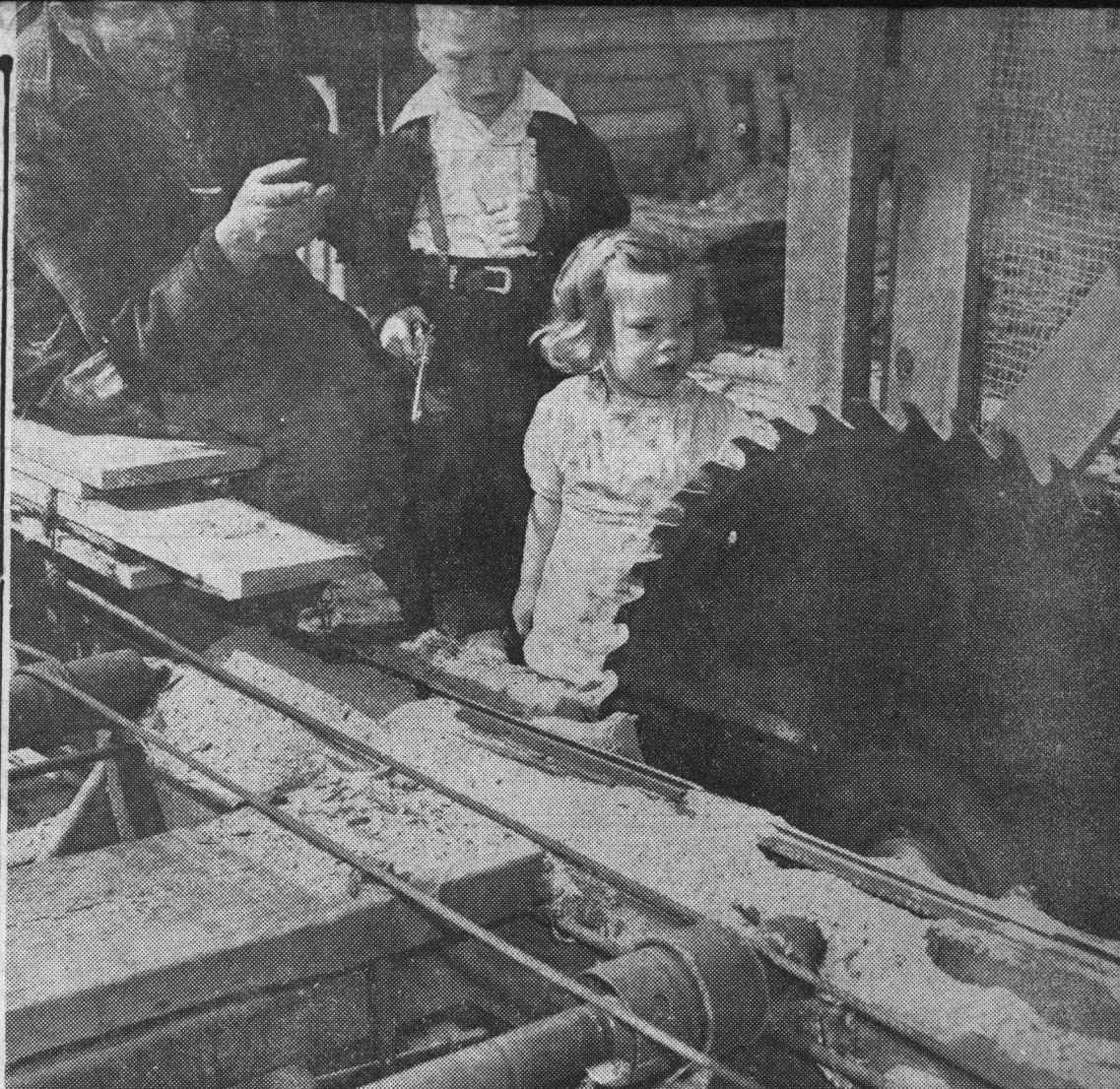
The tunnel to the north is more than 6800 feet long. The one linking Laurel and Glenwood is 5720 feet long. They were faced and lined with timbers cut along the railroad right of way.

The sturdiness of the construction was proven when the big earthquake struck in 1906. Railroads to the north of San Francisco, linking the big port city with the timberlands of the northern part of the state, were put out of commission.

However, trains still ran between Laurel and Alameda on the line which had been taken over by the Southern Pacific in 1887.

Thus it was that the big Hihn sawmill which had been erected at Laurel at the beginning of the century was able to ship to San Francisco the lumber the city needed so desperately for rebuilding after the quake and fire.

F. A. Hihn, who had made himself Santa Cruz' first millionaire, announced the construction of the new mill at Laurel after his crews had logged off the country around



Aptos and Valencia and delivered the timber to Hihn's mill on Soquel creek.

Hihn's move to Laurel was to open a stand of timber virtually untouched.

The bright new machinery, for a Stearns mill, was bought from the Eby Machinery company in San Francisco and transported to Laurel on the railroad.

The mill, the pride of its owner, had a steam operated single band saw. Its capacity was rated at 50,000 feet a day, with a possibility of crowding the run to 60,000 feet if the logs ran good.

The installation of the mill at Laurel virtually marked the end of the days of logging with oxen in the Santa Cruz mountains. Hihn installed donkey engines which dragged the logs over skidways.

The Hihn mill, which operated for 17 or 18 years, reached its peak of production during the years San Francisco was rebuilt. A few years after Hihn's death in 1913, the Laurel mill ceased operations, with most of the available timber cut.

In 1917 the machinery was bought by the California Fruit Growers association and moved to Mather, in the Hetch Hetchy country of Tuolumne county. It operated there until 26 years ago when it was moved to Soquel creek by James A. Harris, Jr., and David Mills, and operated there until four or five years ago as the Monterey Bay Redwood company. Last month some of the machinery from the mill was sold to interests at Ar-

cata, in Humboldt county, and the remainder disposed of to dealers in used mill machinery.

Another high point in Laurel history came in 1909 when the railroad line over the mountains and through Laurel was broad gauged. This meant large railroad crews and many other laborers were at work on the line and on the great tunnels.

The tunnels were widened and the timbers reinforced with concrete. The concrete facing at the tunnel mouths bear the date, 1909.

With the passing of the lumber era, Laurel settled down to a comparatively quiet future. The old settlers, among them the Jordans on the big mountain farm near the highway, improved their places. A few newcomers bought property in the vicinity.

For 35 years George Napier, who is past 83 years of age now, operated a store under a little grove of beautiful redwoods in Laurel. In 1920 he built an addition to the store. In this today is the Laurel post office of which Mrs. Inez Devlin is the postmistress.

Napier, who has been very ill in recent weeks, retired from business about 12 years ago when his wife died. The late Mrs. Napier's sister, Miss Marion Byron, who is 95, also is a resident of the mountain village. Dave Henderson, a nephew of Napier, has made his home in Laurel the last two years, caring for Napier and Miss Byron.

Bears and other objects carved from wood attract passersby and in front of the former store are odd

benches made of beautifully grained redwood slabs, on which Laurel residents lounge while waiting for their mail.

This store meeting place and the Earl La Porte sawmill and home are the centers of information—past and present—about Laurel.

La Porte's father, the late D. A. La Porte, was one of the first station agents at Laurel. Earl La Porte, who was born in Santa Cruz in 1899, has resided in Laurel for 51 years.

He is believed to be the oldest living resident of the little village and says he has seen everyone come who at present resides in Laurel and immediate vicinity.

He resides in the rear section of one of the old Laurel store buildings he has remodeled, and when not working for water companies and other concerns throughout the county, he operates a sawmill which stands near his residence and near the mouth of the Laurel-Glenwood tunnel.

He says in a couple of years he may reopen the store.

Laurel today is without a railroad, but its residents are not pessimistic about the future.

In the winter of 1938-39 washouts on the railroad line between Los Gatos and Laurel cost Southern Pacific \$65,000 to repair. The winter of 1939-40 brought one of the worst storms in the history of the area. Eleven inches of rain fell in less than 24 hours. Washouts again closed the railroad.

This time, railroad officials

(Continued on Page