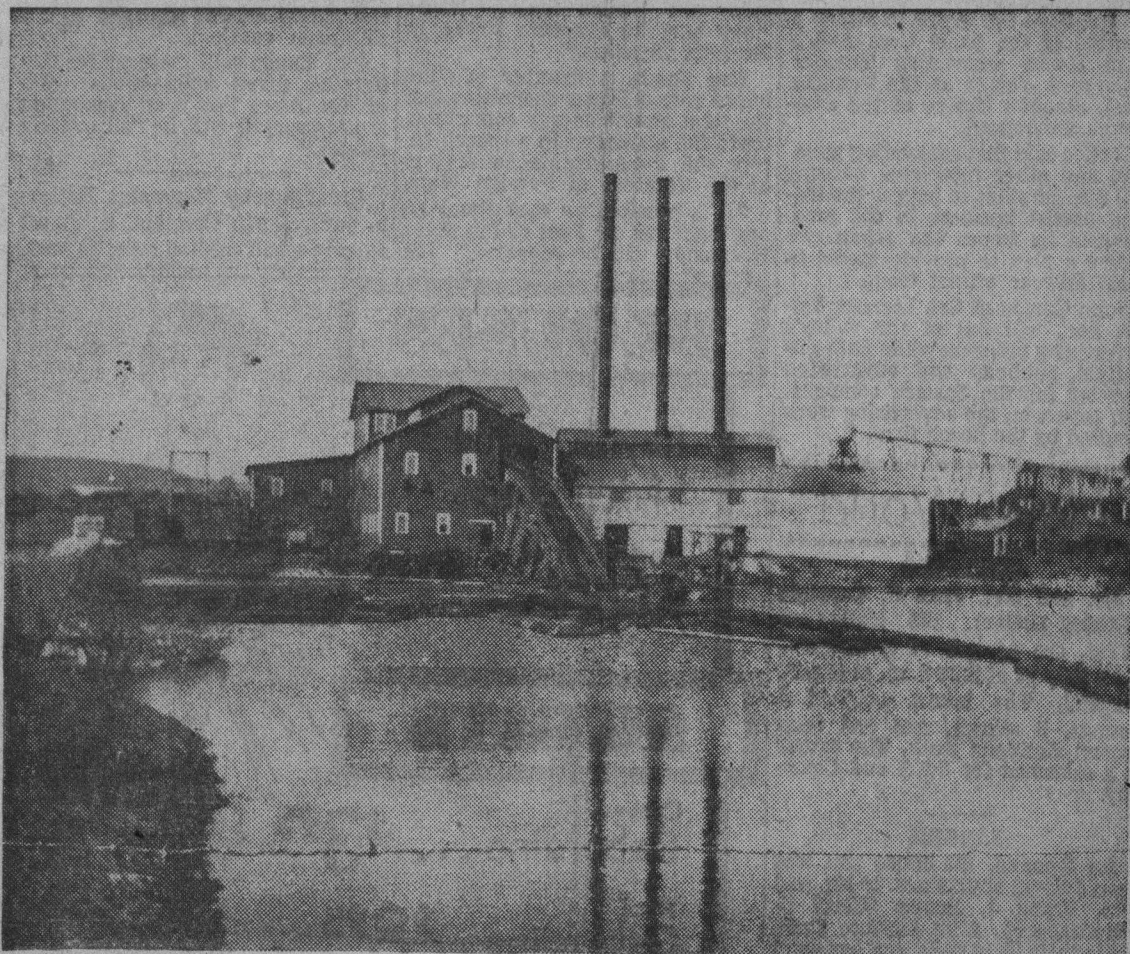


# Santa Cruz Yesterdays



**SAN VICENTE MILL 1909-1923**

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The San Vicente Lumber company's saw mill at the west Santa Cruz city limits operated from 1909 to 1923. It logged 400,000,000 feet of timber but sawed less because of rot in the heart of many of the big redwoods, an abnormal condition.

The 14-year operation enabled the owners to break even, according to David I. Stoddard of Palo Alto, who was the mill superintendent and lived on Van Ness avenue near Mission street.

Construction of the Ocean Shore railroad from Santa Cruz to a point several miles above Davenport in 1905 opened possibility of profitably logging the timber in the Big Creek watershed. Several small mills in the area had teamed their product out.

Mormon interests, George E. Stoddard and Charles W. Nibley, who were running the Grande Ronde mill in the pine area of eastern Oregon, just outside of La Grande, invested in the California enterprise.

### New Machinery

The machinery for the Santa Cruz mill was new. It included a nine-foot band saw with a 14-inch blade, a large size used only for heavy timber stands.

During the years that the San Vicente company logged up Big Creek it had five operations, beginning with the one at Swanton. It took all the Big Creek timber except that on the Deselhorst ranch, on the west branch, where the Lottellis logged 15 years later.

The machinery went to a mill near Susanville at the end of the Santa Cruz operation.

The picture, made during the heyday of San Vicente, Santa Cruz' last and greatest sawmill, looks from the Ocean Shore right-of-way. Here the logs ended their journey from the upcoast mills when they

were dumped into the pond in the foreground.

### Mill Activities

Pond men, working from the boom which is visible, guided the logs with their pike poles toward the chute at the main building in the background. Up to the chute and onto a platform in the main sawing room the logs rode from the pond held in place by the "dogs" on an endless chain conveyor.

Scenes of the great logs riding the saw carriage to be reduced to various sizes and lengths of lumber by the flashing blades, were filmed by motion picture companies. One Hollywood outfit made practically all exterior mill scenes for a production here in the early 20's. Hal Cooley and Pauline Starke were silent film stars who worked in movie scenes in and around the mill. Neither of these players is active in pictures at the present time.

To the right in the background can be seen the planing mill buildings. Out of range to the right were the offices and company hotel, along the west cliff drive—that part which extended from the cliffs to connect with upper Mission street at the western city limits.