

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



OX TEAM ON THE AVENUE, JULY 4, 1913

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Fourth of July was parade time in Santa Cruz for many years. And Independence Day, 1913, was no exception.

Decorations blossomed along the city's main thoroughfare as the big celebration approached. Workers under J. C. Geyer dressed the city electrolier standards with flags and bunting. Small redwood trees were placed along the line of march and flags were stretched across the avenue from the Lower Plaza to the S. P. depot, and to the beach.

William Lemos, beachfront artist and idea man, had been busy for days, designing building and decorating floats. As chairman of the fireworks committee he had something in store for three nights of celebration pyrotechnics.

Dynamite at Dawn!

The great day dawned as firing

squads under Leo Caplatzi greeted the sunrise in three sections of the city with dynamite detonation. Visitors had been pouring in from outside points. In the bay were the cruiser Marblehead and four torpedo boats with the California naval militia aboard.

Camped at Delaveaga park was a cavalry troop from the Monterey Presidio and a field hospital and ambulance corps from the Presidio in San Francisco.

C. A. Dunning was the parade grand marshal. The great procession started at Pacific avenue and Mission (Lower Plaza) at 10 a.m., proceeding the length of the avenue to the S. P. depot and countermarching to the point of beginning.

There were two long divisions which included bands, marching units, industrial floats, decorated

automobiles, municipal vehicles, 'horribles' (popular comic stunts favored in the earlier days), motorcycles, etc.

Cowell Oxen

One of the famed Cowell ox teams, pictured above was a feature of the long parade.

Public exercises were held at the post office steps after the parade. At 2 p.m., also at the plaza, athletic games were featured for the youngsters.

At the beach there were three successive afternoons of sports and games: a tug-of-war tournament, naval militia cutter races, swimming races, a launch race. And at night—fireworks!

The local streetcar system was at its peak. Manager George Fitzgerald announced that 31,000 fares were collected on all units of the local traction company!