

SANTA CRUZ. BIOGRAPHY. LOVE, HARRY

Santa Cruz Yesterdays

Among the picturesque array of colorful characters who trod the hills of early Santa Cruz was Captain Harry Love, sometimes referred to as the Black Knight of the Zayante, from an earlier written comparison of him to the Sir Walter Scott figure.

Harry Love was a born adventurer who first saw the light of day in Vermont about 1818. He went to sea at an early age; was shipwrecked. From then on his adventuring was on land. He grew up with a rifle in his hands.

Love fought in the Blackhawk War (1831-32), between the United States and the Sac and Fox Indians. He lived in Texas when it was a republic under the lone star flag; and he continued in Texas after it became a state under the stars and stripes. He lost his brother at the Alamo.

When the Mexican war for independence (from Spain) broke out, Harry Love became a captain of scouts under General Zachary Taylor. For two years he was on active duty in northern Mexico. As a scout and express rider he had to ride alone for hundreds of miles across deserts and mountains carrying messages to distant outposts. No service in the war was more dangerous.

Was Peace Officer

At the close of the war Harry Love headed to California in the first gold stampede. For a time he was a miner. But he seems to have had little success with a rocker and, abandoning it for a six-shooter, became a peace officer. He was deputy sheriff at Santa Barbara and then at Los Angeles and finally made his place in history as a captain of State Rangers.

He came to the Santa Cruz mountains in 1855, met the Widow Bennett of Zayante, and they were later married (in Santa Clara).

Captain Love spent much time at their sawmill, located above Newell creek on the north bank of Love creek, which bears his name, up through 1858. The flood of 1862 carried the mill away. In the meantime they had been dividing their time between the Zayante and Santa Clara, where they had a farm.

Fatal Fracas

It was here, on June 28, 1863, that 50-year-old Love came to a tragic, violent end, in a shooting affray with an employe on the farm, Christian Iverson, who he believed to be paying undue attention to his wife.

Captain Harry Love's greatest claim to fame was the annihilation of the Joaquin Murrieta gang of bandits and killers, who had terrified the people of the state for about three years.

The state legislature in 1853 passed a special act creating him a captain to raise a company of rangers in Mariposa county to scour the country in search of the feared Joaquin! He is credited with having killed him in the wilds of Tulare county in 1854. Joaquin was but 23!

The 1854 legislature appropriated \$5000 for Capt. Love's services. And it can be assumed that his pockets were lined with gold pieces when he came to our mountains.

Camera-shy

Capt. Love's personal appearance was a subject of some argument in early California newspapers. He was variously described as a tall manly figure with sparkling eyes and long curling hair falling to his shoulders, a dashing cavalier type, and as a "gorilla."

A contemporary newspaper picture in the period of his fame was a crude sketch, but it was sufficient to indicate that he was neither a gorilla nor a cavalier. But he was anything but a handsome man.

History does not record what prompted camera-shy Capt. Love to pose for the above rare photograph right here in Santa Cruz in the middle 60's. The reader may judge as to his good looks or lack of them. Note his ready pistol at right beneath his coat.

E. P. Butler, a local photographer of the 60's had just opened a fine studio on Pacific avenue in "Drennan's new building," featuring "all the latest styles of pictures, sun pearls, enameled cards, am-
types, photographs, carte de
s, etc."

The famed bandit catcher was



CAPTAIN HARRY LOVE, BANDIT CATCHER
(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

included in last Sunday's "Parade of Pioneers"—part of the festive dedication ceremonies at new Henry Cowell Redwoods state park, portrayed by Deloss Wilder.