

OCT. 1, 1950

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



OLD "RAILROAD" WHARF

When the little seven mile Santa Cruz & Felton narrow gauge railroad began operating its trains in 1875 its southern terminus was David Gharkey's wharf, just east of the first wharf, which became Cowell's.

Five years later, when the South Pacific Coast laid its rails over the Santa Cruz mountains from Alameda and took over the Felton line, it bought the Gharkey wharf.

Gharkey, a 44-year-old man, with his wife had crossed the plains in 1849-50 in a party which brought John W. Morgan, a brother of Gharkey's wife, and Titus Hale, both of whom became residents of Santa Cruz.

Santa Cruz had one wharf, a narrow inclined chute off the cliffs put up in 1853 by Elihu Anthony, when two years later Gharkey re-

ceived permission from the legislature to put up his landing place.

Other Wharves Followed

The wharf was just west of the present municipal wharf. Eight years after he built it Gharkey extended its length to accommodate larger ocean going vessels. About the same time the California Powder Works built their own wharf off Main street, in the middle of what is now the city's principal beach area.

After the railroad took over Gharkey's wharf piles were driven for a connection between the two, to permit movement of freight between the two structures. The link, called the cross-wharf, was torn out in 1882.

Until the present municipal wharf was built in 1914 the "railroad wharf" was the landing place for fishing boats and for several years a fish cannery operated on its outer end.

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Cannery On Wharf

The Santa Cruz Canning company's sardine cannery, prominent in this wharf view made 30 years ago, was a branch of a plant on lower Washington street. The latter had been established in the large old former mill building, of a lumber yard. This again was transformed into a skating rink before it burned several years ago.

The smaller building on the old wharf was at the time the local office of the Western California Fish company of San Francisco.

The railroad wharf was dismantled starting late in 1922 after standing beside its larger and longer successor for eight years. The old and new wharf approaches nearly met at the landward end, but the municipal veered sharply eastward from its predecessor.

Today when tides are low remnants of piling of the old railroad wharf are still discernable in the beach sands.