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Features

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The president's bully visit

'Save the redwoods,' Roosevelt urged us

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

EIGHTY-SIX years before George Bush wandered through the earthquake-tumbled Pacific Garden Mall in October 1989, President Theodore Roosevelt saw a very different Pacific Avenue.

On the morning of Monday, May 11, 1903, many of the city's approximately 7,000 residents turned out to wave flags and flowers at the carriage procession featuring Roosevelt, the 26th president of the United States.

"Preceded by the Naval Reserves and Hastings' Band, first Beach Hill was visited," reported the Santa Cruz Morning Sentinel the next day. "Then the



"When the band plays it makes music 'near the Sentinel office,' and when the president



party came down Pacific Avenue, which was crowded.

"Flags fluttered in the breeze, being strung across the street and displayed on stores and residences. The courthouse was elaborately decorated with bunting.

"Pupils from the public, parochial and Sisters' schools lined both sides of the street. With their flags and flowers, they presented an inspiring sight."

Roosevelt, on a swing through California that May in 1903, was the second U.S. president to visit Santa Cruz. The first was Benjamin Harrison (who was in office from 1888 to 1892).

William McKinley, who was first elected in 1896, was supposed to stop by Santa Cruz in May 1901, but his wife got sick in Monterey and they cut short their California visit.

McKinley was assassinated in Buffalo, N.Y., later in 1901, and Roosevelt succeeded him.

The first leg of the 1903 trip, which was Roosevelt's first glimpse of California, included a visit to Los Angeles, where, the Morning Sentinel reported:

"Police arrested a brother of Leon Czolgosz, who was employed in a factory there, and held him in confinement until the president passed through that city. There was absolutely no reason for depriving him of liberty except the fact that his brother murdered President McKinley."

Roosevelt left Southern California on Saturday, May 9, and headed north in a special train on the Coast Line. He stopped in Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and then Monterey, where he spent the night Sunday.

On Monday, reported the newspaper that weekend, Roosevelt would speak at the old Sentinel building on Locust Street and Pacific Avenue.

speaks he will orate 'near the Sentinel office,' but this does not signify that anyone will be allowed on the Sentinel porch next Monday," said the Morning Sentinel on Sunday. "Porches are weak. Crowds are dangerous."

The President Reception Committee, chaired by J.W. Linscott, requested all Santa Cruz businesses, banks and public buildings be closed from 9 to 11 a.m. while Roosevelt was in town. Roosevelt was scheduled to have a barbecue steak lunch among the big trees above Santa Cruz.

There were 10 carriages arranged for the procession, which left the train at 9:45 Monday morning and headed to Beach Hill.

The lead carriage, of course, carried Roosevelt. Driving the two black horses was John Werner, sitting next to a Secret Service agent.

Inside with the president were Santa Cruz Mayor Clark and Linscott, along with Roosevelt's secretary.

On its drive down Pacific Avenue, said the Morning Sentinel, "Children strewed the president's pathway with flowers."

When they reached the Sentinel building, Roosevelt, looking east toward Cooper Street, told the crowd, "I am to visit the grove of the great trees, and I wish to congratulate you, people of California, because of this region, and to congratulate all on what you have done to preserve these trees."

"Cut down one of these giants and you cannot take its place. Nature was its architect and we owe it to ourselves and our children's children to preserve them. Nothing has pleased me more in California than to see how thoroughly you are preserving the monuments of the past, human and natural."

"I am glad to see the way in which the old mission relics are

being preserved in this great and wonderful new state. . . .

"I am more pleased that you should preserve the great and wonderful natural features here, that you should have in California a park like Yosemite, that we should have state reservations of these great trees. . . .

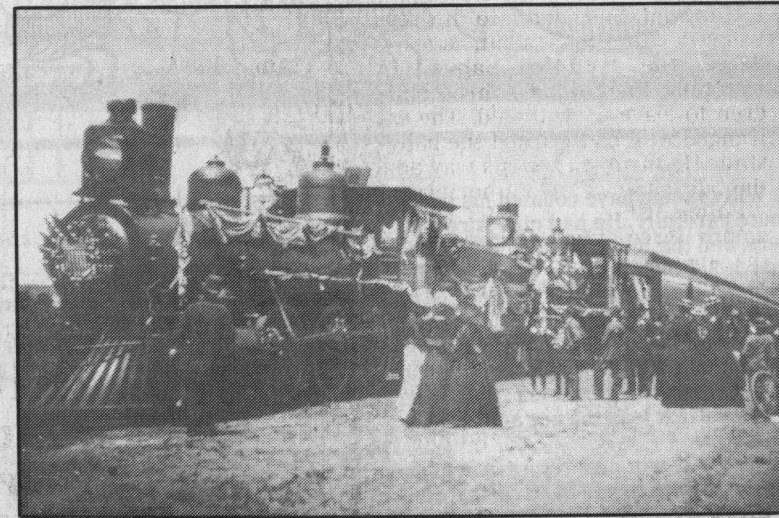
"We should see to it that no man for speculative purpose or for mere temporary use destroys the groves of great trees. Where the individual and associations cannot preserve them, the state and if necessary the nation should step in and see to their preservation."

Santa Cruz businessman and civic leader F.A. Hihn then presented Roosevelt with a silver plate inscribed with the words that made the president an honorary member of the California Pioneers.

The procession, including A.A. Morrey and W.C. Hoffmann on horseback next to the president's carriage, then headed slowly up Locust Street to the special train.

"Entrance to the grove was made through the Cowell grove, where people from Felton, Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek had assembled," reported the Morning Sentinel.

In addition to the steaks, Roosevelt was served Spanish beans, strawberries, coffee, cake and Ben Lomond wine.



A decorated train took Roosevelt to Cowell redwoods.

"It was whispered to the president by Fred W. Swanton that the woman who had prepared the Spanish beans is the mother of 34 children," said the Morning Sentinel. "This amused the president, who laughingly remarked, 'She ought to be president of some association. I don't know what.'"

The name of the woman cook was not reported, although the names of the men who prepared the steaks were duly noted.

After lunch, Roosevelt again paid tribute to those who had pushed for the trees to be pro-

ected by park status from loggers.

"Let me preach to you for a moment," said the president. "Do not do anything to mar the beauty of the trees. Above all, do not place cards on them. Any man who places his name on the trees should be sternly discouraged. Cards give an air of ridicule to this solemn and majestic grove. . . . See to it that this wonderful gift of nature is kept as a heritage for your children and their children."

"Oh, I am so glad to be among these trees."

Photos courtesy of Santa Cruz Historical Society

'Oh, I am so glad to be among these trees,' said Teddy Roosevelt, the second president to visit Santa Cruz.

'We should see to it that no man for speculative purpose or for mere temporary use destroys the groves of great trees.'

— Theodore Roosevelt

Roosevelt, at his request ("That I love you not less, but the trees more"), then was allowed to wander alone through the trees for about 15 minutes before his train left for Santa Cruz on its way to San Jose and San Francisco through Watsonville.

"Just before the train was ready to start for Santa Cruz a tree was dedicated to the president's honor," reported the Morning Sentinel.

Roosevelt asked that the card bearing his name be taken off the tree and a small one be substituted "so as not to mar the beauty of the tree."