

Davenport

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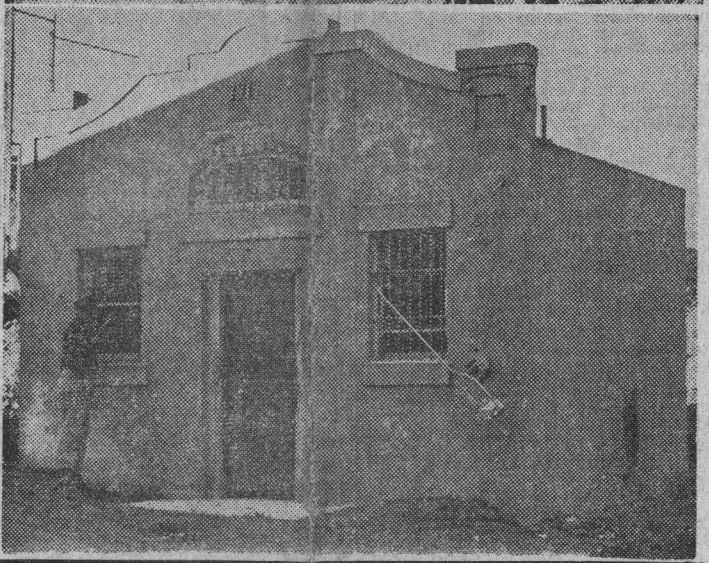
Most residents don't leave their cars on the street for long. Above is the reason. At night the cement dust mixes with the dew and sticks to the cars. Some residents call Davenport the dust bowl.



Above is a panorama of Davenport from the sea, showing the fine beach, surrounding mountains, and cement plant to the left. At left is the jail built in 1914. With plenty of cement around, the 15'x15' "vault" must weigh 75 tons with walls eight inches thick. Three

cell doors are boilerplate. Now owned by Jess Carrothers and used as a tool house, it was seldom used in its day. Two youngsters who borrowed a horse for a joy ride were put in here for a scare. Sometimes drunks slept away their haziness on the hard cell cots.

Above, is the 235-foot cement dust stack at the Pacific Coast Aggregate's plant, built to help keep dust away from Davenport and the sprouts fields. Many thousands of dollars have been spent by PCA to solve its dust problem. Two other stackless exhausts keep the town shrouded in whitish gray. Although the plant was here first, many legal dust damage suits have been fought through the years. The plant runs 24 hours a day. Right, Rev. Arbert Pool is also a handyman at his Gospel church. Many field hands worship here. Starting six years ago, Rev.

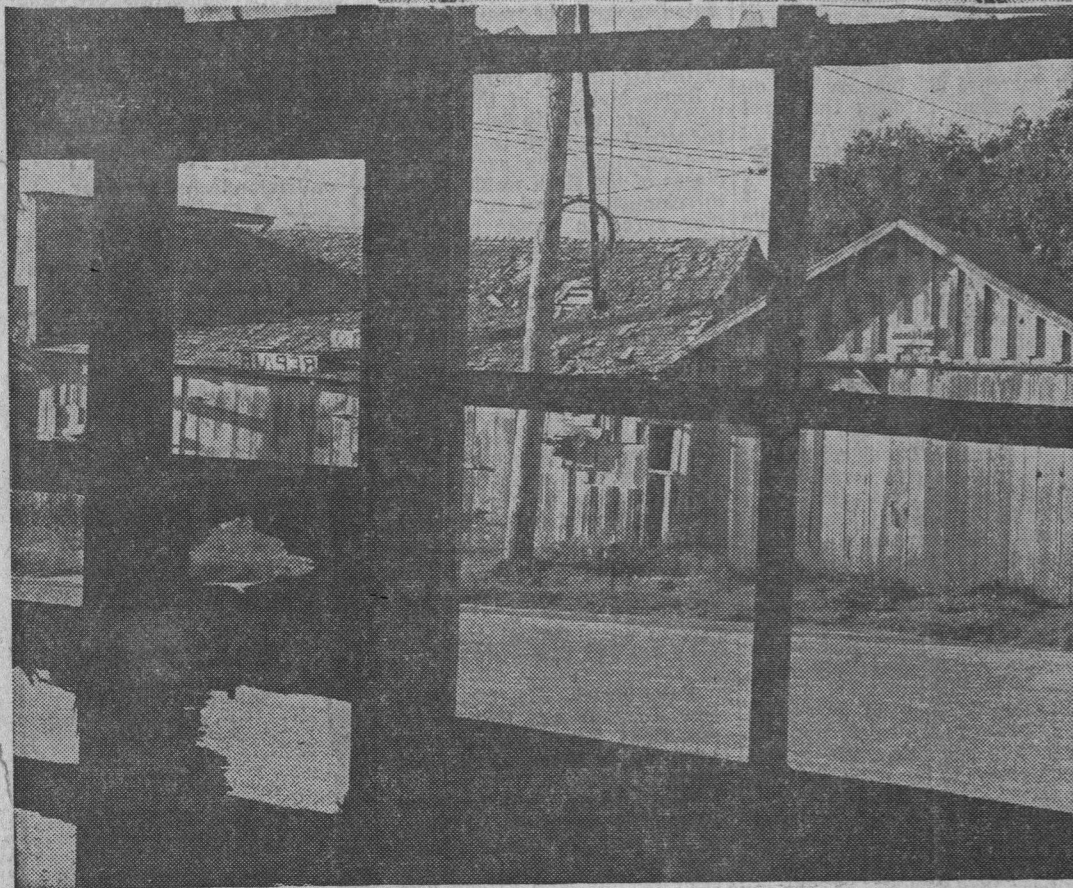


DAVENPORT

Story and Photos by Wally Trabing
A town is a place to live in—a place to get used to—a place that gets used to you.
Once your bones feel easy there, a body can sense its worth and overlook its shortcomings. Like Davenport.
Davenport appears between one of the washboard

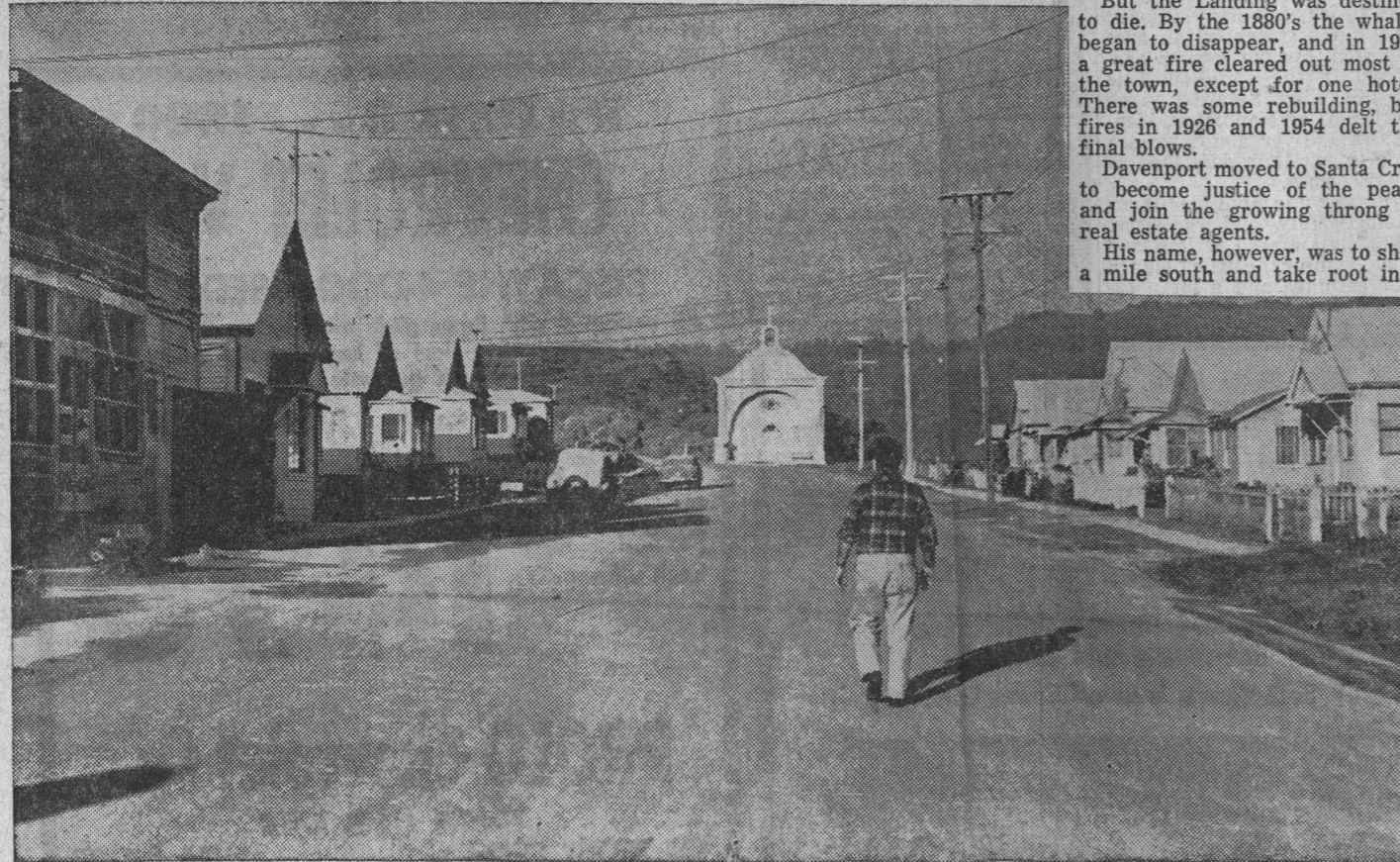


Pool and his congregation re-modeled an old two-story home to make the church. The reverend is still at it.



Around 1907, Joe Bourche built a butcher shop in the thriving town. It endured until 1944. The photo was taken from inside the ghostly building, looking out across Davenport avenue at the abandoned blacksmith shop built by Alex Luttrell. Tony Libua, still a

village resident, was a blacksmith here for many years also. Below is the main street—Davenport avenue, dead-ended by the mission-like Catholic church built in 1913. The whole town is bathed in the same grayish hue.



humps on Highway 1, about 11 miles north of Santa Cruz, like a North African oasis minus the palms.

Her neighbors on one side is a blue desert of sea. On the other the humped-back coastal mountains, but her main backdrop is the jutting spires of the Pacific Coast Aggregates cement plant, which around the turn of the century gave birth to this cliff-side hamlet.

Although surrounded by beauty, Davenport exists within a constant shroud of grayish white potash, sodium and potassium dust from the plant. Part ghost town, plagued with dust, and gutted by former fires, the village of 300 holds the staying power of the redwood tree.

While early explorers gave the site slight notice, except to curse the nearly-impassable gulches in the vicinity, Captain John Davenport, who came around the Horn from Rhode Island in 1849, noticed something very lucrative about the area.

He built a 450-foot wharf about a mile north of the present village in 1867. It became known as Davenport's landing, and the loading point for lumber, posts, fuel wood, and lime.

But the glint in the captain's eye was for the frolicking whales jetting umbrellas of water off shore. According to Al-verda Orlando, Davenport's historian, a lookout was stationed on the cliff and called the farmer-whalers by bell when the big mammals appeared. They were chased by long boat, pulled ashore and processed.

The present town's boosters claim the cliffs here are still the best whale-watching grandstand in Monterey bay from January to May.

By 1875 there were three hotels, a restaurant, a saloon, two stores, a shipyard, post office, blacksmith shop and another saloon. There was dancing, drinking, gambling and things going on every night.

But the Landing was destined to die. By the 1880's the whales began to disappear, and in 1915 a great fire cleared out most of the town, except for one hotel. There was some rebuilding, but fires in 1926 and 1954 dealt the final blows.

Davenport moved to Santa Cruz to become justice of the peace and join the growing throng of real estate agents.

His name, however, was to shift a mile south and take root in a

new settlement which began to flourish about 1907 around the new Santa Cruz Portland Cement company.

One source gives Davenport a peak population of 800 in the early 1900's. The big land holder was the Coast Dairy company, a Swiss-controlled firm. It sold the land to the cement plant, to people to build homes, (1921) and still controls about 6800 acres along the coast. The present Ocean View hotel was built in 1906 by the land company.

Up to World War I, Davenport grew and prospered. There was a butcher shop, general store, livery stable, a bakery, dance hall, two hotels a school and thriving bawdy house.

The Oceanshore railroad laid tracks from Santa Cruz to Davenport and another line was started from San Francisco to join it. It got to within 38 miles of the village when the money gave out.

There are stories of Prohibition rum-running, and a few existing cellars were used to store the stuff. A jail, sturdy as Fort Knox, was built in 1914, but held no one more dangerous than a drunk.

With the development of good roads and fast cars following World War I, resident began finding dust free Santa Cruz only minutes away and the slow exodus began.

Today there are about 30 homes in Davenport, and a few more in New Town, on the north side of the cement plant. There's a Catholic church, a Full Gospel church, Gregory's country store and service station, a bar called Mira Mar inn, the old Ocean View hotel, the Davenport bakery, the Davenport Producers association's processing shed and Myrtle Garavanta behind the window of the town's post office. Only 5 per cent of the 300 PCA employes live here.

You ask about the people and you'll hear that Albert Gregory, 84; Dorillo Morelli, 86; and Frank Garavanta, about 54, are the oldest citizens; that Hazel Thompson of Santa Cruz has taught school here for 27 years; that Elio Orlando is the unofficial mayor; that most of the first settlers were Swiss; that Joe Brovia, born and raised here, knocked the longest home run ever hit in Seals stadium when he played with the Seals; that Alvin Gregory is a former supervisor and ship captain; that Francis Gregory is fire chief; that Charlie Bella ran Ocean View hotel from 1919 to 1958, that menfolk work mostly in lumber, sprouts, cement and dairying.

Other old family names are: Garavanta, Libua, Pianavilla, Caiocca, Smith, Giovanonni, Poletti and Celebrado.

Social life swirls around the crack Davenport volunteer fire department and Davenport Improvement association. The Pacific school is their civic auditorium, which also maintains the main green patch of lawn in town.

Progress is not overwhelming, but not dead. The last new home was built about three years ago.



Above, Davenport school youngsters set off from school to the Catholic church for their weekly hour of religious instruction by Father Paul J. Pavese. Another group attends Protestant services in a shed behind the Mira

Mar bar. Below is the old cheese house built around 1900 by the Swiss Mocettini family. Located on outskirts of Davenport, Monterey Jack was once produced here. It's still owned by Coast Dairy and Land company.

