SANTA CRUZ YESTERDAYS

BEST KNOWN LANDMARK—OUR TOWN CLOCK (From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Santa Cruz' classic Victorian town clock need take no bow to any other such edifice in all of California, if indeed, such there be!

Although it has performed its duty silently for more than 20 years, the city's great clock labors on. Its voice was stilled in deference to hotel guests' comfort, after erection of the city's major hostelry.

The first Odd Fellows' building was erected in 1873-74, on a site previously occupied by W. F. Waterman's blacksmith shop. The building later suffered from fires in 1899 and 1909, but each time was restored.

Clock Stopped

The fire of '99 was the worst. The clock was ruined in that one. The fire burned with determination, unyielding for two hours, in spite of determined battle by local firemen.

Since 1874 it had been performing its duty, by day and by night, measuring the minutes and striking the hours. In sunshine and in rain, and now, in heat, fire and terror, the clock moved steadily on.

While fire was raging below, the clock kept working. The bell rang out the midnight hour. The fire crawled closer and closer. And the firemen beat back the flames.

But each time the fire returned. One o'clock arrived, and loudly, clearly, with a tone of defiance, the great bell, literally ringed in flames, rang the hour for the last time.

Doomed

Between the flames and the force of the water, the clock was doomed. But for another half hour the clock slowly ticked away the seconds and minutes. At 1:30 the clock gave up its struggle. The hour hand had made its final circuit.

The clock had been installed with funds raised by public subscription, costing around $1000.

Our town could not be without its clock—and its main lodge hall. So little time was lost in building the present one.