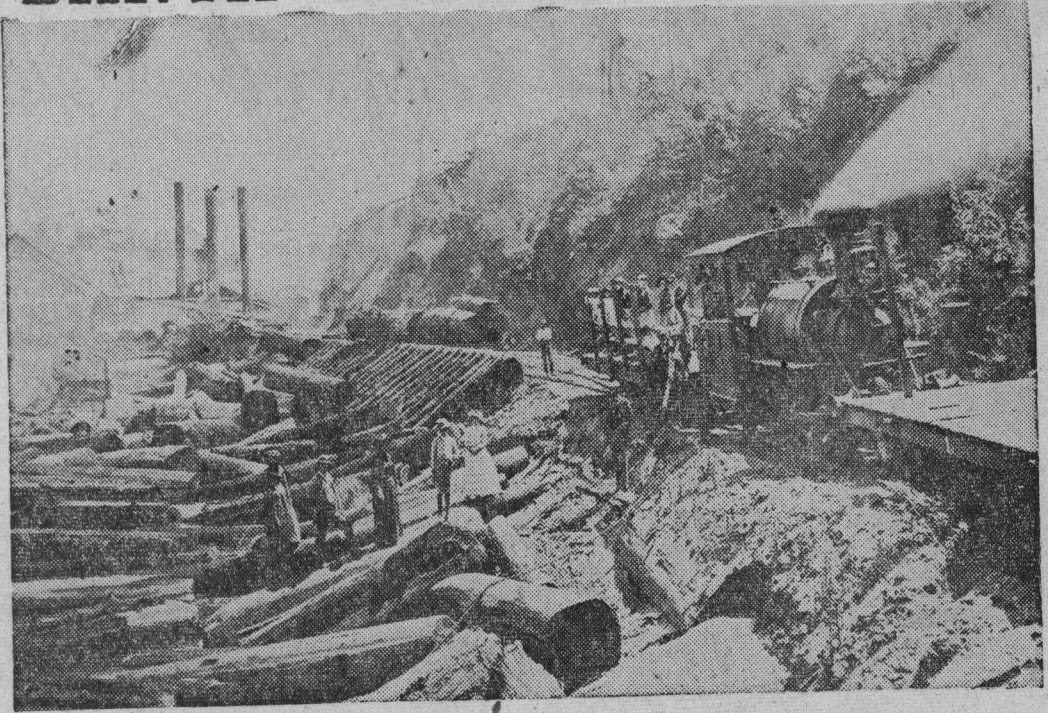


7-7-57

SANTA CRUZ YESTERDAYS



APTOS LOGGING ACTIVITY IN THE '80's

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The Aptos area and its hinterland was the scene of considerable lumber mill activity in the latter years of the 1800s.

It was also on the Santa Cruz-Watsonville railroad and was terminus of the branch railroads serving two large lumbering activities. These were the F. A. Hihn Valencia mill and the Dougherty-Bassett mill at Loma Prieta.

Hihn, who had had a large part in building the Santa Cruz-Watsonville railroad, completed his mill at Valencia in 1883.

Watsonville interests had a large part in the Loma Prieta Lumber company, which built in the summer of 1884. Charles Ford was president and John T. Porter vice president. Lucius Sanborn was manager, but the finances back of the operation were the

money of A. C. Bassett, W. P. Dougherty and Timothy Hopkins.

The branch railroads carried the cut lumber to the main line at Aptos, and logs to the mills.

"Betsy Jahe", Santa Cruz' first locomotive, which had done construction work on the Santa Cruz-Watsonville railroad was again used for the Loma Prieta branch and for a few years hauled the lumber out.

Mill Rivalry

It was so small it could only take out six carloads a day, which was but half of the mill's capacity. Rivalry between the two big mid-county mills was inevitable. In 1887 the Loma Prieta mill announced it had cut 93,000 board feet of lumber in a 10-hour run. Hihn's mill came back with the announcement it cut 143,000 feet in a day. Loma Prieta mill then

retorted with a 6½ hour run in which 181,000 feet were cut.

The two huge operations brought down vast stands of redwoods in the Aptos back country hills on into the Hinkley basin divide country. In the two decades of 1880 to 1900 the hills were nearly denuded.

Mill Towns

During the years of the operations each company had its own town and school and post office, plus railroad to the "main line" at Aptos.

Today's picture was taken at the peak of the operations, and it gives the impression that there was at that time, "plenty doing".

In more recent years, before removal of rails, Hollywood movies were taken of pseudo lumbering activity together with a "made to order" wreck on the mill railroad.