

Reception Held Yesterday To Honor Samuel Leask Sr. On 100th Birthday

One of California's most distinguished merchants and civic leaders, Samuel Leask Sr., was honored yesterday by his family and friends with a reception at the Santa Cruz Woman's club.

A family dinner honored Santa Cruz' elder statesman on Christmas day.

Mr. Leask, who founded Santa Cruz' largest department store nearly 70 years ago, is still active and alert.

Leading merchants, educators and civic dignitaries from throughout the state attended yesterday's reception.

At an age when most men are content to sit in the sun and relax, Mr. Leask is eagerly following the growth of the community, a city he helped build from an 1890 village to a bustling, progressive community.

Born in the settlement of Craigdom Parish of Tarvis, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, he spent his early boyhood on a small croft or farm.

Mr. Leask left home at the age of 13 because of the extreme difficulty of life in the primitive agriculture of the era. He began an apprenticeship with a dry goods firm in Aberdeen.

After four years he completed his training and from that time he has been engaged in his chosen occupation.

In 1883, Mr. Leask was employed by Marshall and Snelgrove, a firm of international reputation. He left the same year for the United States and was employed in Boston and Memphis before reaching San Francisco in 1884.

He went to work for Murphy Grant and Company, a pioneer California wholesale dry goods establishment.

In 1885, Leask joined the firm of Charles Ford and Company in Watsonville and later became a stockholder in the establishment. His employment lasted for seven years.

Soon after establishing residency in Watsonville, Mr. Leask was able to send for his mother and sister, Jean, who left home in Scotland and came to reside in the home he established for them.

His sister later married Stephen Martinell who established the business still carried on by members of his family in Watsonville.

Early in 1892 an opportunity presented itself for the acquisition of a business in Santa Cruz when the establishment known as the "Seaside Store" at Pacific



Samuel Leask Sr.

avenue and Church street was placed up for sale.

Against the advice of his Watsonville associates, who regarded Santa Cruz as a poor business town, Mr. Leask acquired the firm in partnership with John Johnson.

The opening of the store in June, 1892, marked the beginning of the 69 years in which Mr. Leask has devoted his energies and his interests in the business and civic development of the Santa Cruz community.

Four years later, Mr. Leask purchased Johnson's share and since then the firm has been conducted by Mr. Leask and his family.

Soon after coming to Santa Cruz in 1892, Mr. Leask married the former Clara Johnson of Watsonville.

The development of the business over the years has involved many additions of area and continued modernization of the store facilities. Major changes were effected in 1906, 1928, and 1945 and in each instance with the view of providing the people of the community with a more attractive and modern shopping center.

Mr. Leask's public service began about 1899 when he was appointed to serve on a committee to endeavor to secure financial assistance for the Carnegie corporation for money to build a public library.

The efforts of the committee were only partially successful when a grant was received which proved to be too small to finance

ers to write a charter for the city of Santa Cruz.

Mr. Leask and W. P. Nether-ton traveled to New York in 1909 to attempt to seek relief in the matter of judgment of \$265,000 which resulted from litigation and which jeopardized the title of the city water works. After several weeks of negotiation with representatives of the creditors, the creditors agreed to a reduced settlement which was later provided by a bond issue.

In his various civic services, Mr. Leask has never sought nor held paid political office but has never failed to volunteer or to accept those public responsibilities which were asked of him.

He served as president of the California Retail Dry Goods association in the second year of its existence, but retired at the end of his term because of the pressures of wartime duties.

During the years of World War I, 1917-18, he was a member of the board of exemption, an or-

ganization similar to the present-day draft board.

Mr. Leask served as director of the Santa Cruz Beach company for 50 years and as a director of the Santa Cruz Lumber company during its formative years.

He is the father of five children, Samuel Leask Jr., state director of the department of health and welfare and former Los Angeles city administrator; Haswell Leask and Sherwood Leask, both of Waterford; James B. Leask, Santa Cruz, and Mrs. R. P. Franklin (Margaret Leask), San Carlos. He also has 10 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Leask died in 1947, having shared for more than 50 years the growing family, the years of work and accomplishment and rewards of a full life.

Mr. Leask is still active and takes almost daily auto rides through the wooded mountains of Santa Cruz and the thriving city which he helped build.

Board Resolution Commends Merchant On 100th Birthday

Resolution No. 885-61, on the motion of Supervisor Burton, duly seconded by Supervisor Silliman, the following resolution is adopted:

Resolution Commemorating The Civic Services Of Samuel Leask On His One Hundredth Birthday.

Whereas Supervisor Robert Burton has called to the attention of this board of supervisors the fact that one of the foremost citizens of this county for many years, Mr. Samuel Leask, is about to celebrate his one hundredth birthday, and

Whereas members of this board of supervisors are well aware of the many boards and commissions, too numerous to mention, on

which Mr. Leask has so ably served in the interest of California, Santa Cruz county and the cities of the county as a trusted and exemplary citizen using his talents in the services of others, and

Whereas this board especially notes the service Mr. Leask has rendered the cause of education and his service on local boards of education and in various state commissions in furtherance thereof, and

Whereas Mr. Leask first came to this county as a young man in 1885 and through his skill and integrity established himself as a leader in the business community of the county.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the board of supervisors of Santa Cruz county that said board does take this opportunity to commemorate the civic services of Samuel Leask on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday and to express to Mr. Leask the appreciation of the community for these services.

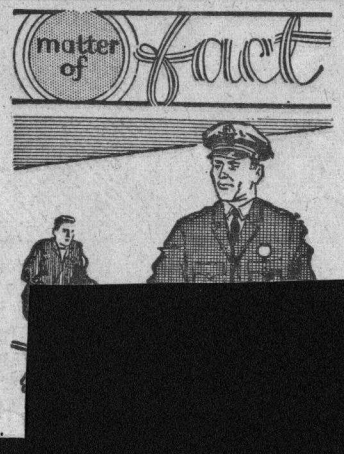
Be it further resolved that Supervisor Robert Burton shall deliver a certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Leask.

Passed and adopted by the board of supervisors of the county of Santa Cruz, state of California, this 18th day of December, 1961, by the following vote:

Ayes: Supervisors McLean, Burton, Silliman, Leask, and

Minister Is Murdered In Michigan

Brooklyn, Mich. (AP)—A slayer was hunted today in the death of a retired Methodist minister who was beaten with a hammer, bound



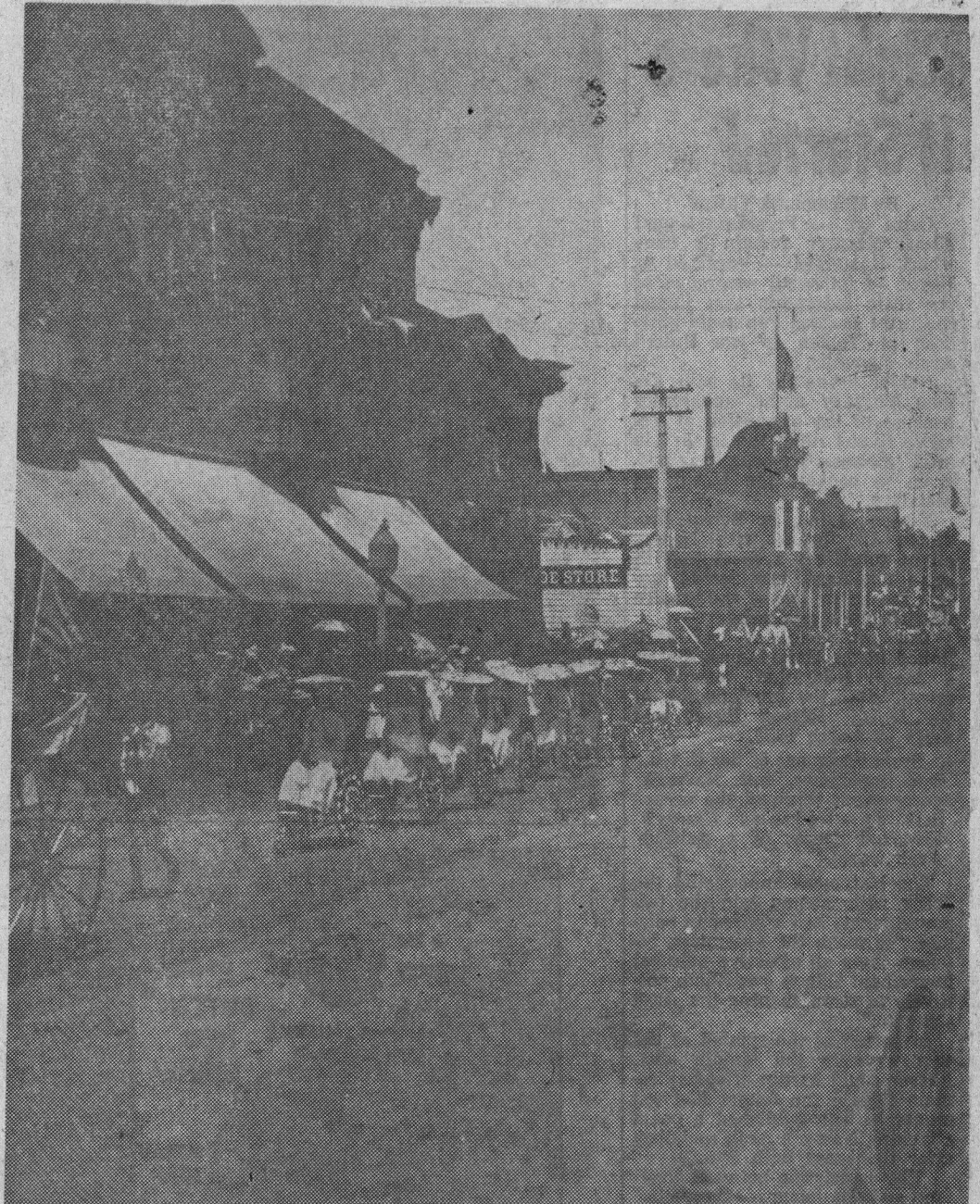
This old stereotype photograph, taken by G. R. Bushnell, an amateur photographer, shows Pacific avenue during a Fourth of July parade back in the early 1890s. The white building in the middle of the picture is the original Seaside store, started

by Samuel Leask Sr., who observed his 100th birthday yesterday. Photo from the Roy Boekenooen collection.

"Atom" comes from the Greek word "atomos," meaning "not cut" or indivisible.

Leask's Department Store

Old Photo Shows Original Leask's Store



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were only partially successful when a grant was received which proved to be too small to finance the necessary building.

Mr. Leask volunteered to go to New York to make a personal appeal for additional financial aid. The result was a further grant which made possible the construction of the present library. In later years, three additional grants were provided to finance branches in outlying areas.

Early in the efforts to secure library facilities, Mr. Leask was appointed a library trustee and served in that capacity for 40 years.

He served as a member of the school board from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1911 to 1914.

In 1929, he was named by Governor C. C. Young to a commission to make a survey of educational conditions in California. As one of nine laymen on the committee to conduct a "Study of Educational Problems," the project resulted in two years intensive effort and a comprehensive report on the findings which was widely circulated.

Twice Mr. Leask served as a member of the board of freehold-

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