

A Big Jack *Big C* Reminiscence

Ed. "Sentinel":—The reference in your paper to Jack Collamore as the "giant of the woods" of the Santa Cruz mountains, brings to my mind incidents of the long ago. When I first knew "Big Jack" he was working at the lime kilns of Davis & Jordan, their works then being small and their land holdings limited, sometime before 1860. They did not then own the Rancho Del Rincon, and for which they later traded the steamer Santa Cruz. This ranch belonged to a Mr. Stanley, who had been a governor of a Southern State, and on it Mr. Collamore started a lime kiln, but he was neither a capitalist nor a business man, and much money was sunk in the enterprise. On it Alexander McDonald conducted a lime kiln for Hull & Co. until Davis & Co. purchased the land, when the works were shut down forever. About this time a husky butcher came down from Halfmoon Bay, San Mateo Co., Charlie Schuyler by name, throwing all the "big ones" he came in contact with on the road. Reaching Santa Cruz he got employment in the meat market of Chace & Rountree, Mr. C. later becoming our mayor and Mr. R. sheriff of this county. Both Charlie and Jack loved their water with a stick in it, and when the former was carrying about three inches of the real stuff he considered himself bigger than our largest. An election in those days that was pulled off without a rough-and-tumble contest of some kind in this town was a monotonous affair. The saloons were open all day, and no one barred. Charlie feeling bigger than Heenan, then the California champion or Sayers, the English champion who licked Heenan later in a raw knuckle fight—gloves were only for children then—grabbed Jack, to find the Charlie back pinned to the floor in five minutes.

Jack disappeared from this county about 1870 to return later, say 1880, but he was a broken down man, to enter the county hospital, where he died. He had little to say, and was so reduced in physical appearance that his old wet associates, the boys that helped him drink up his large earnings when he was "monarch of all he surveyed" knew him not, or to avoid him passed by on the other side of the street, for his appetite always remained with him.

Jack Collamore was as strong as they make them, as brave as a lion, and within his breast beat a heart as big as an ox.

SANTA CRUZ PIONEER.

N. B.—To add spice to the above I might say that I saw Jack fold his arms when a large man, in the Santa Cruz plaza on an election day, drew a knife on him. This man had spit in the face of a Santa Cruzan, and previously had killed an opponent in a San Francisco bar room, but for which act he had been acquitted, on the ground of self-defense. This man was a fighter, but when Jack squared off it was: Don't you strike me, Jack!

S. C. P.