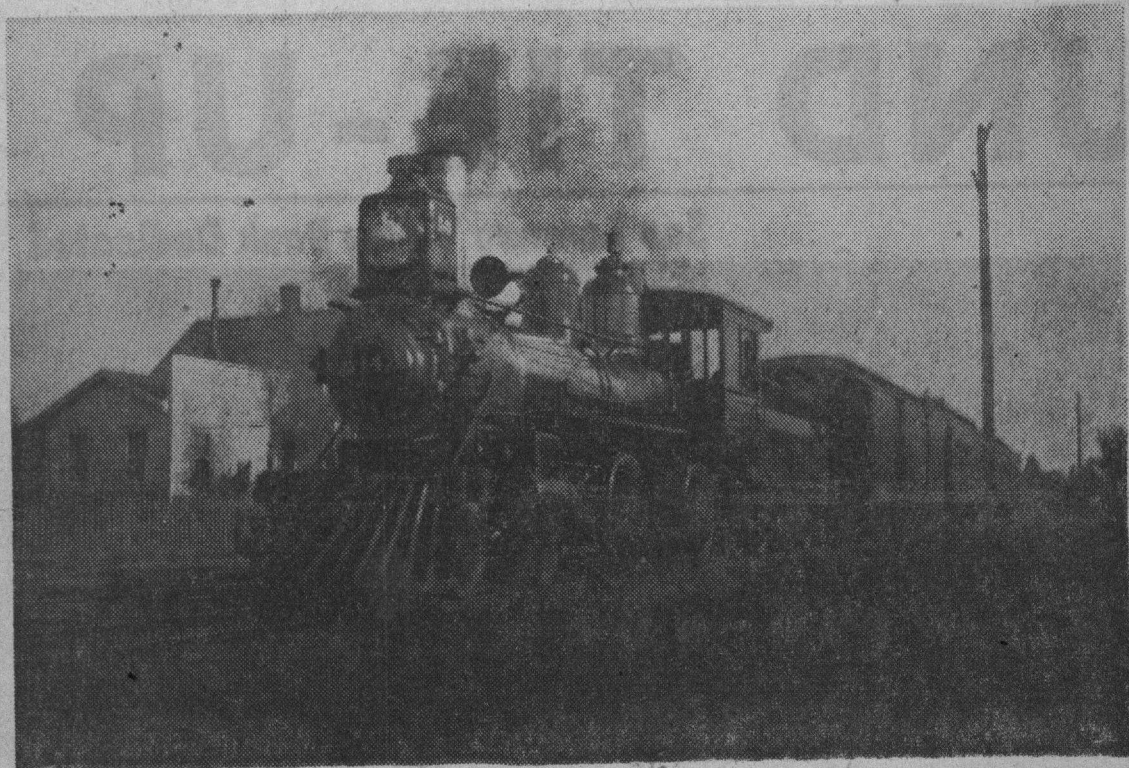


# Santa Cruz Yesterdays



**NARROW-GAUGE RAILROAD DAYS**

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

When this picture was taken (1885), Santa Cruz had been "on the railroad" about ten years, with the Santa Cruz & Felton line up the west bank of the San Lorenzo and the Santa Cruz & Watsonville, which connected with the main line.

Engine No. 14, a Baldwin, was the pride of the South Pacific Coast Railway Co. which narrow-gauged its way through the Santa Cruz mountains southward from Los Gatos, San Jose and Alameda, five years before. First regular trips, three schedules a day, were made May 15, 1880.

The train shown was outbound on Chestnut avenue near what is now Maple street, enroute from the beach to its first stop at the south end of the Mission Hill tunnel. Passengers were due in San Francisco four hours later, via San Jose,

Alviso, Newark, Alvarado, Alameda (the mole at San Antonio creek) and ferry across the bay.

**Started in 1878**

The South Pacific Coast, backed by Senator James G. Fair and his associates, had gone under construction early in 1878. In its early stages it was known, between Alameda and Newark, as the Bay and Coast Railroad. Its construction across the mountains was difficult and a feat of engineering for the time, with a series of tunnels. The summit of the mountain road was in Tunnel No. 3 where the road pierced the main ridge.

A published description of Tunnel No. 3 when it was about completed (June, 1878) said it was 6,155 feet long. The high point elevation in the tunnel was 803 feet above sea level and 690 feet below the crest of the range at

that point. Seven miles or so from Los Gatos, the tunnel spanned the county line. Large numbers of fossil shells were found during the excavating.

## **Planned Eastern Extension**

Senator Fair and his cohorts planned to continue the line across the valley from Santa Cruz and Watsonville through the Coast range by Pacheco Pass, and ultimately to meet the Denver & Rio Grande, which was then building a narrow-gauge line west from Denver. The project never was realized.

South Pacific Coast had three ferry boats, the Newark, Bay City and Garden City, which carried passengers between the Alameda mole and the foot of Market street, San Francisco. They took over the old Santa Cruz and Felton narrow-gauge, one of whose major feats of engineering had been the Mission Hill tunnel. This was enlarged for standard gauge trains later. In 1884 the Felton branch was extended to Boulder Creek.

## **Becomes Southern Pacific**

On July 1, 1887, two years after the picture was taken, the South Pacific Coast leased its line to the Southern Pacific, which had in 1885 assumed operation of all Central Pacific lines.

Early in 1906 the old South Pacific Coast narrow gauge tracks were made broad gauge as far as Wrights, in the Santa Cruz mountains, and the following year the standard sized tracks were extended to Santa Cruz. For several years, however, the branch to Boulder Creek continued to be narrow-gauge, necessitating transfer of freight and passengers.

At its northern end the railroad made connection in 1906 with the Central Pacific from West San Leandro to Elmhurst. After the earthquake the trains operated to the Oakland pier.

## **History of Engine**

"Number 14," the tidy locomotive shown, was built by Baldwin in 1884, a 4-4-0 type. Diameter of the drivers was 50 inches; the cylinders were 14x18 inches. Overall weight was 51,700 pounds.

Rail fans say that the engine was later sold to the old North Shore R. R., on which it was renumbered "17." When the North Shore became Northwestern Pacific, the "17" became "85." Still later it was changed to "93."