

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



POPULAR MUSICIANS OF GAY 90's

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

George Hastings first came to Santa Cruz on August 24, 1874, as the boy cornetist with the Montgomery Queen circus. He had joined the circus at his home at Bloomington, Ill., that spring, and returned with it again the following year.

He liked the town and came here with his wife in the middle eighties opening a little music store in a space in Christian Hoffman's office.

Later he took a large space in the one-story wooden building which stood about where the St. George hotel lobby is today. The Hastings' made their home in rooms upstairs in a building across the street until 1887 when he built a house at Lincoln and Washington streets, which still is standing, somewhat remodeled.

Musician and Teacher

Hastings not only led his band, foremost musical organization in Santa Cruz for nearly two decades, but trained an orchestra of adults and a "Brownies orchestra" which

at times numbered 50 children. He was leader of the Congregational choir and played the pipe organ there. Almost any instrument he could play or teach.

Just after the turn of the century he moved to Fresno but always came back to Santa Cruz in the summers until his death in 1923.

Hastings' brother, Scott Hastings, and a sister, Maud Hohman, came to Santa Cruz about the same time he did. Scott Hastings was said to have been a professional baseball player around Chicago and played with the Olympics here. He died in 1907 at the veterans home at Santa Monica.

Personnel of the band group pictured here, in the 90's, is as follows: Left to right (standing), Enoch "Noke" Alzina, tuba; W. V. "Billy" Pringle, baritone horn; Charles Arcan, alto horn; Robert S. "Bob" Tait, baritone; Charles Coolidge, alto; Roland Case, alto; L. F. Williams, tuba.

Seated: Ellery Young, drum and

cymbals; Albert Hepp, cornet; Johnny Pepin, cornet; Albert Rawel, clarinet; Leader George Hastings, cornet. In front is young Johnny Alzina, snare drummer.

Only surviving member of the above group is R. S. "Bob" Tait of California street, who left the band when he went to work for the city over 45 years ago. He retired in '46 but remained on until a couple of years ago. Tait's longest service was as fire chief and head of the water department.

Enoch Alzina was a deputy, a court bailiff and court house employe for many years. Arcan was of the family for whom Arcan street (now Soquel avenue from Pacific to the river) was named. Coolidge was a printer. Lou Williams led the beach band later. He became part owner and orchestra member at the popular Unique theater; conducted for years a blacksmith shop on Water street near the San Lorenzo. His son Rinaldo became a big league baseball player.