

# Cowell Dies

## Last Member Of The Cowell Family Dies

Samuel Henry (Harry) Cowell, 93, philanthropist and one of California's great landholders, died last night at his Jackson street home in San Francisco.

He was the last direct survivor of the famous Cowell family, developers of early California. Only last August he gave 1623 acres to the state to form the new Henry Cowell Redwoods state park near Felton, in memory of his father, Henry Cowell.

Death was due to bronchial pneumonia which set in after Cowell was confined to his bed following a fall in his home November 5. The Cowell home, a San Francisco landmark at 2610 Jackson street, extends through the block from Jackson to Pacific street, overlooking much of San Francisco.

Samuel H. Cowell was the president and owner of the Henry Cowell Lime and Cement company and also a huge landowner in his own right. He owned property in 16 counties in California while the company has holdings in 15 counties.

Since the death of his father in 1903, he was the principal officer of the company although in later years the management has been handled by E. H. Connick, general manager of the Cowell Lime and Cement company.

The Cowell company built a cement plant at the town of Cowell near Concord in Contra Costa county and produced their own cement there until the plant was dismantled in 1946.

"Harry" Cowell was principally interested in cattle and horses, and on the large Cowell ranches throughout the state, he stocked great herds of Herefords. "White faces, they're the only type of cattle to raise," he often told associates.

Born in San Rafael, Samuel Cowell came to Santa Cruz with his family at the age of 4 and attended Bay View school.

He was raised at the Cowell home ranch at the head of Bay street. In the 1880s, he belonged to the Alerts, crack running hose team in Santa Cruz. He was one of the three lead men due to his speed afoot.

In his younger years he spent a great deal of time at his ranch at Natividad near Salinas, one of his favorite stock ranches.

The Cowell family moved back to San Francisco in 1879 although all of the members of the family were frequent visitors to Santa Cruz, especially Harry.

Henry Cowell, founder of the Cowell company and one of the state's largest land barons in the pioneer days after the "Gold Rush" period, had five children, Samuel H., Ernest, Isabella, Helen and Sarah.

Sarah, the youngest member of the family, was killed in a horse and buggy accident in Santa Cruz, May 14, 1903.

Ernest, the only member of the family to marry, died March 18, 1911, at the family home in San Francisco.

Helen and Isabella Cowell, who were nearly inseparable during much of their life time, spent their winters in the east and summered in Europe. They inherited the 22-acre Cowell estate on Camino Al Largo in Atherton. Helen died February 21, 1932.

After her death, Isabella ordered the house to be torn down although the grounds were to remain well kept up. She put up a high wire fence around the property and never returned.

Isabella died at the age of 92 in 1950. In her will she left \$1,000,000 to build a hospital for sick and crippled children in Sacramento to be called the Helen E. Cowell Memorial hospital. Plans for the construction of the hospital are now under way. She also left a large grant to the old folk's home in San Francisco and bequeathed art treasures to the De Young Memorial museum and the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

Besides Samuel H. Cowell's gift of the Redwood lands for a state park, he and members of the Cowell family donated to the San Francisco Association for the Blind the land and building in San Francisco housing Blindcraft.

The Cowell Infirmary on the campus of the University of Cali-

fornia was made available by a gift of \$250,000 in the will of Ernest V. Cowell. The men's gymnasium at the University of California was built by a gift from the will of Ernest V. Cowell plus contributions from members of the Cowell family, totalling \$250,000 along with funds supplied by the Associated Students at UC.

Last year Samuel Cowell sold the Cowell beach property to the City of Santa Cruz, making the popular beach, located west of the municipal wharf forever available to the public.

The big unanswered question is "What will happen to the Cowell properties now that Samuel H. Cowell has died?"

The query may be answered when his will is filed in the near future. Because of the location of the Cowell ranch on Bay and High streets and other properties in the area, the future of the land poses many interesting theories.

The two men closest to Samuel Cowell were his business associate, E. H. Connick and Max Thelan, senior partner in the law firm of Thelan, Marrin, Bridges and Johnson in San Francisco, long time legal advisor for the Cowell family.

Henry Cowell came to California in the Argonaut days after his brother, John, had come here from Massachusetts. Their family home for many years had been in Wrentham, near Boston, where they had an 160-acre ranch.

John later returned east while Henry stayed in California and later became one of the state's wealthiest men.

Cowell came to Santa Cruz in 1865 and bought the interests of Albion ordon in the firm of Davis and Jordan, lime makers. He paid \$100,000 for the partnership and in 1888 when Davis died, Cowell purchased complete control of the company for \$400,000.

He was active in the development of the firm and it purchased ships to bring cement from Belgium to California, founding the basis of his fortune on early day building materials, later branching out into vast land holdings throughout the state.

Henry Cowell bought where there were limestone deposits and also bought ranches. The company and Samuel H. Cowell owned huge ranches in Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Sacramento, Merced and Contra Costa counties as well as holdings in downtown San Francisco real estate.

The land holdings took on a new meaning with the land boom in California after World War II and the company's operation became much more of a real estate operation than the original building materials firm.

The Cowell holdings in Santa Cruz county total about 6500 acres.

George Cardiff is the manager of the Cowell holdings of Santa Cruz county.

Funeral services for Samuel H. "Harry" Cowell are to be held at 11 a.m. tomorrow at the H. F. Suhr Funeral Home on Mission street in San Francisco.

The death of Harry Cowell brings to an end one of California's foremost families, owners of great properties and through their philanthropy, benefactors of thousands of students and residents of the state where they obtained their wealth.

Henry Cowell Redwoods State park will remain a perpetual monument, not only to Henry Cowell, but to Harry Cowell, the man who made it possible for Californians to forever enjoy the beauties of the redwoods and to play on the sands of Cowell beach.