

Aptos' Fred Mills Deserves Large Share Of Credit For Area's Small-Bore Range

By Sy Berg

The almost-completed small-bore range at De Laveaga Park will be opened from today through December 30 so that a special, 90-minute course in safe gun handling can be offered free to the many youngsters of the Santa Cruz area who will receive firearms for Christmas.

The program, to be offered mornings and afternoons, is sponsored by the city's department of parks and recreation, which is distributing free permit cards for the course at their office in the civic auditorium building.

Instructors for the course have all been approved and certified by the National Rifle association. They include Parks and Recreation Director Carl Bengston, with more than 10 years of rifle instructing experience, and Sgt. Charles Derby, firearms training officer of the police department.

But often unseen, behind this carefully planned, smoothly run program is a modest man who has spent the better part of his some 77 years working with youngsters and safety programs. His name is Fred C. Mills.

Mills, who has lived in Aptos since 1957, was born in Maine fifteen years before the turn of the century. As a boy he, like the other boys, had a gun and hunted small birds and other game. It was, however, in the field of life saving and water safety that he established his career.

After overseas duty with the YMCA during World War I, and top executive experience with the National Red Cross, Mills became National Director of Swimming and Water Safety for the Boy Scouts of America in 1925.

For the next 25 years, until his first retirement in 1950, Fred C. Mills, like most capable men, add-

ed more and more responsibilities and gave of himself unstintingly, not only in his chosen field, but also in his work with the National Rifle association.

He never lost his interest in firearms, first becoming a member of its Board of Directors in 1932. In 1940, then a life member, he was appointed

to the association's executive committee on which he served until his retirement.

He combined his interest in firearms with his work in scouting by instituting training courses for rifle instructors and encouraging firearms skill and safety programs for boy scouts throughout the country.

Possibly the best indication of his skill as a firearms instructor is the record of his son, Frederick, whom he started teaching at the age of six! The boy went on to become the captain of his high school rifle team, the individual schoolboy champion of New York City three years, and captain of the rifle club team at Ohio State university.

Mills first came to California in August, 1951, when he was called out of retirement by the San Francisco Council of the Boy

Scouts to be named director of their training center in Fairfax until he retired again in 1957.

During that six year period, however, in addition to the duties of his office, he conducted NRA instructor training courses and gave instruction in Junior Hunter Safety to scouts who wanted to get their hunting licenses.

After moving to Santa Cruz county he conducted at least three instructor training courses, and taught juniors at the Graham Hill range, which had been built by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Posse.

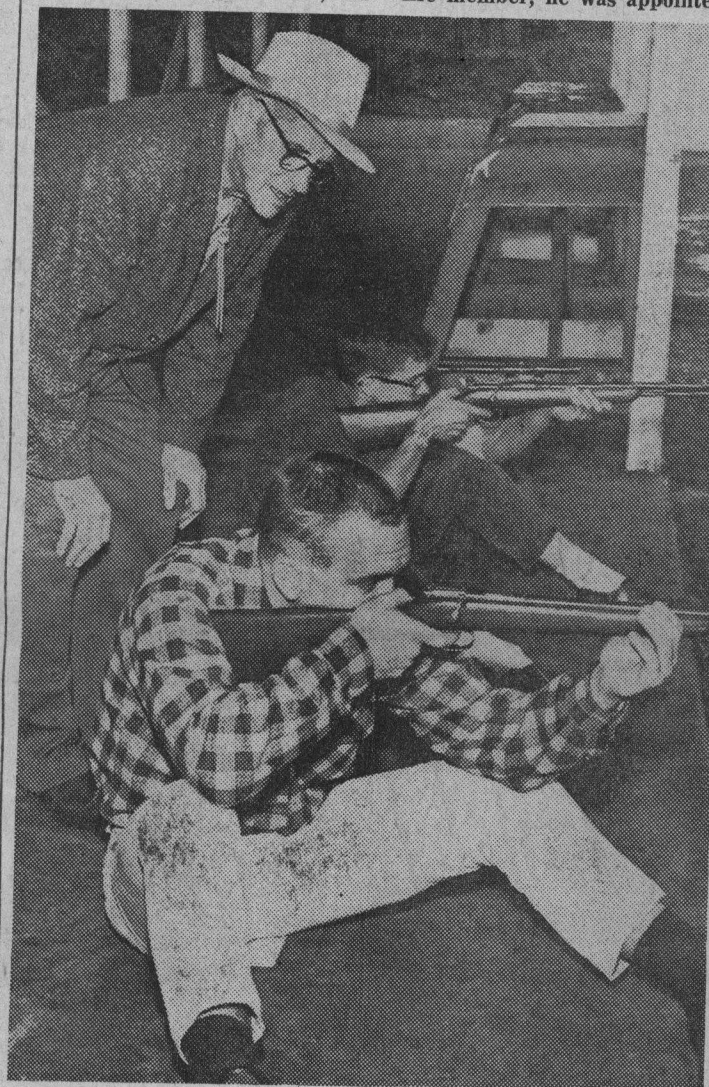
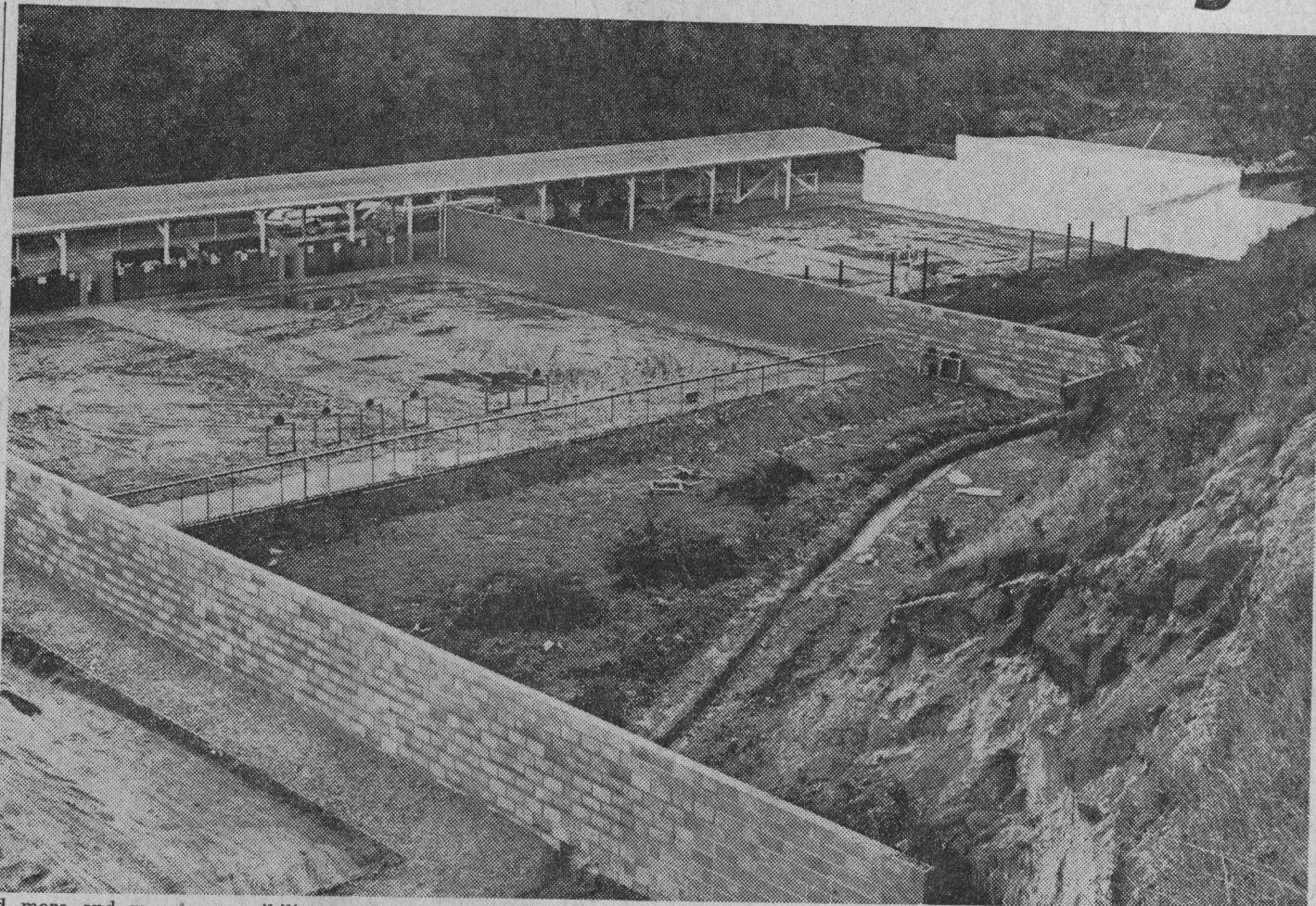
Today, a member of the Santa Cruz Hand Gun club, a counselor of the National Rifle association—which permits him to train and qualify instructors of hand guns and rifles, and a hunter safety instructor of the California Fish

and Game department, Fred C. Mills has been able to make tremendous contributions to the formation of the over-all program of the emerging small-bore range at De Laveaga Park.

It has been natural for many people who do not know him, out of respect for his participation as executive, trainer of instructors, and gliding light of the new range, to think of him in awe as sort of a "Grand Old Man."

But somehow titles and honors seem superfluous in recognizing the worth of this man who has never lost his Maine accent or his "down-east" readiness to attack a problem.

Those who know his best have found him just as ready to pitch in with a paint brush or a hammer as with his priceless, sagely advice. To them he is "Fred."



Fred C. Mills gives some pointers to Dave Foster (foreground) and Bill Shaffer, firing at the small-bore range at De Leavaga Park. Mills is a counselor of the National Rifle association.

Brown Is Accused Of Bias In Naming Municipal Judges

San Francisco (AP).—Gov. Brown has been accused of by-passing members of the Negro race in recent appointments of municipal court judgeships.



Fred C. Mills, Aptos resident since 1957, observes while Director of Parks and Recreation Carl Bengston and Police Sgt. Charles Derby make a bit more

up of individual pieces of tile left over from many different jobs to give a sort of "patchwork" quilt effect. It is, in a sense, appropriate for the range, which is the result of

many individual dreams, sacrifices, and contributions given freely and unselfishly.