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Women With a Purpose

By MARGARET KOCH
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When Alice Earl Wilder climbs into the saddle tomorrow at Santa Cruz Courthouse Pageant of Pioneers, she will be depicting a fiery little woman who did a lot for the San Lorenzo Valley.

Josephine Clifford McCrackin fought a battle of pen and ink to save the Big Basin redwoods.

Alice also does battle for the San Lorenzo Valley in her capacity as secretary-manager of the Greater San Lorenzo Valley in her capacity as secretary-manager of the Greater San Lorenzo Valley Chamber of Commerce. She has been referred to, wryly at times, grudgingly at other times, but always with great respect, as the "watchdog of the San Lorenzo Valley."

So, it is particularly fitting that Mrs. Wilder play this part in the Pageant.

Josephine McCrackin not only fought to save trees, she waged a lifelong battle for the rights of animals. Once she defied a husky teamster, single-handed, threatening him with the law unless he stopped whipping his overloaded horses.

One unthinking Davenport coastal resident once shot an eagle; its mate stayed around for days, mourning. Jose-



ALICE EARL WILDER...

phine heard about it — she seemed to always hear these things.

She took pen in hand and wrote newspaper articles that got the public stirred up to the boiling point. If they could have discovered the marksman they might have tarred and feathered him—or boiled him in oil.

Once she took up the cudgels for meadowlarks; boys in her neighborhood were shooting them with slingshots. She also served as president of the local Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

But Josephine's biggest battle was with the powerful lumber interests of those days. The Big Basin redwoods were threatened. She trudged miles of Basin trails in her long dark skirts and high top shoes. She wrote, she spoke, and she became the scourge of the lumber industry.

In the end she and her fellow workers won the battle and the California State Legislature passed a bill for funds to purchase the Big Basin.

Josephine's own home, Monte Paraiso, high in the Santa Cruz Mountains, was lost to a forest fire. And she mourned her burned redwoods like they were human friends.

In 1916, Mrs. McCrackin was honored with "Josephine McCrackin Day" at the San Diego Panama-California International Exposition. The following year, Mary Pickford "adopted" her as a grandmother.

In 1920 the fearless little fighter died, leaving her Big Basin redwoods safe for future generations. The San Lorenzo Valley owes Josephine Clifford McCrackin a place of honor in its history.

Today, the Valley has Alice Wilder to carry on. She's still going strong — red hat and all.



JOSEPHINE CLIFFORD MCCRACKIN ...
she fought for trees and birds