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Pseudo Santa Cruz

By Frank Perry



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Photographs published in old books and on postcards can be useful and easily accessible sources of historical information. But publishers sometimes made mistakes in the captions. Presented here are examples of images with captions that are either in error or misleading as to location.

Introduction

Published images such as souvenir photographs, postcards, and stereographs, or pictures in books, magazines, and brochures can be important sources of information for historical researchers. Like other sources, however, they must be used with caution. While most have printed captions that are fairly accurate as to location, the examples herein are either in error or, at the very least, misleading. This sampling should serve as a warning to people doing historical research.

The examples fall into four categories. (1) Images labeled as a location in Santa Cruz County but which were taken someplace else. (2) Images labeled as someplace else but which were taken in Santa Cruz County. (3) Images taken in Santa Cruz County but not identified as to location so that they could be used generically. (4) Images taken at a location in Santa Cruz County but incorrectly identified as another location within the county.

This article focuses on errors as to location. Other factual errors are not included. To compile a list of those would be overwhelming. Also omitted are handwritten captions on images in collections. Only printed captions on published images are included. Readers should also be aware that there are place names in other parts of California and the United States that might be confused with ones in Santa Cruz County. For example, there is a Scott Valley in Shasta County (could be confused with Scotts Valley), and a Big Trees in Calaveras County. There is a Live Oak in Sutter County and Santa Cruz Island off southern California. There is a Santa Cruz County in Arizona, a Mt. Hermon in Massachusetts, a Felton in Delaware, and a Capitola in Florida (though it is not an incorporated city). There is a Mystery Spot in Michigan and there used to be one in New Mexico. Usually there is enough other identifying information with images of these places, however, to eliminate confusion.



Though captioned "Santa Cruz," this was taken in Vancouver, British Columbia (see page 8).

Images labeled as a location in Santa Cruz County but which were taken someplace else

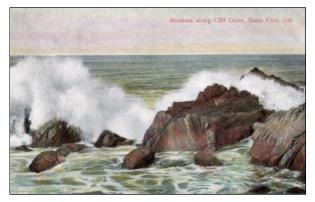


Figure 1

Postcard

Caption: "Breakers Along Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, Cal."

Publisher: I. A. Moore, Santa Cruz (Printed in Germany)

Date: Not postmarked, but style is circa 1910

Many postcards though the years have showcased Santa Cruz County's beautiful coastline, especially the majestic cliffs along West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz—with its crashing waves and natural rock arches. Figure 1, however, is not Santa Cruz. There is no scene like this in Santa Cruz County, and the type of rock is wrong. Most likely, it is the Monterey Peninsula where the rock is granite instead of sandstone.



Figure 2 Postcard Caption: "Scene Near Watsonville, Calif." Publisher: Pacific Novelty Co., San Francisco and Los Angeles Date: Postmarked October 3, 1930, Watsonville Based on careful examination of the geology, this pretty coastal scene is not Watsonville or even Santa Cruz County. The coast near Watsonville does not have such steep cliffs with rocks extending into the breaker line. The shoreline pictured also lacks the broad beaches typical of the Watsonville area. The scene closely resembles the Palos Verdes region of Los Angeles County, especially Point Vicente.¹ If it is Point Vicente, however, the original photograph would have to date from before 1926 when the Point Vicente Lighthouse was built. The style of the postcard, with the white boarder, is typical of the 1920s.



Figure 3 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Santa Cruz, Calif." **Publisher:** Tichnor Bros, Inc., Boston, Mass. **Date:** Postmarked August, 1964, Santa Cruz

Yellow stripes seem to have been a popular postcard style around the early 1960s as seen in this and figures 4 through 9. All have two images with at least one or both that appear not to be Santa Cruz County. On this one the shoreline is not Santa Cruz, and the bottom scene with the fall colors looks more like New England.



Figure 4 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Santa Cruz California" **Publisher:** Pacific Distributors, San Simeon and Pacific Grove, Calif. Printed by Dexter Press, New York

Date: undated, but probably early 1960s.

While the upper photograph could possibly be Santa Cruz, the lower one is definitely not. There are no Santa Cruz beaches with a series of low groins to trap sand.

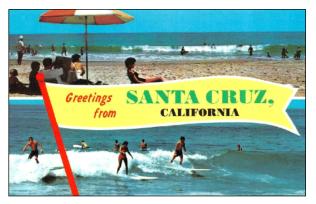


Figure 6 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Santa Cruz, California" **Publisher:** Pacific Distributors, Marina, California; Mike Roberts Color Productions, Oakland. Date: undated, but probably early 1960s

These beach scenes do not show any surrounding landscapes that document where they were taken. The lack of wetsuits on the surfers suggests Southern California or Hawaii.

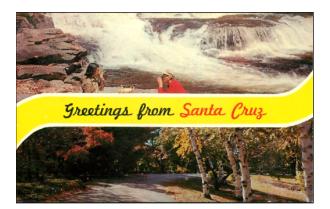


Figure 5 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Santa Cruz"
Publisher: Don Mar Sales Co., Aptos, Calif.
Printed by Dexter Press, New York
Date: undated, but probably early 1960s Neither scene is in Santa Cruz County.



Figure 7 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Santa Cruz"

Publisher: Pacific Distributors, San Simeon and Pacific Grove, Calif. Made by Dexter Press, New York

Date: Undated, but probably early 1960s

All of the marine life are tropical species not found in the waters of Santa Cruz County. Most are types commonly sold in gift shops. Curiously the snails in the upper left photograph are all coiled the wrong direction, indicating that the image was reversed.



Figure 8 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Capitola, Calif." **Publisher:** Scenic Art, Richmond, California **Date:** undated, but probably early 1960s

The coastal cliffs in the upper picture are not the cliffs at Capitola and probably not even Santa Cruz County. There are cliffs in San Mateo County that look similar.



Figure 10 Postcard

Caption: "Picking Oranges near the Snowfields; Greetings from Santa Cruz, Cal."

Publisher: M. Rieder, Publisher, Los Angeles and Leipzig.

Date: Undated, but style is very early 1900s

Oranges have never been a Santa Cruz County crop (except for single trees in backyards), and the mountains very seldom have snow. The scene is most likely Southern California, which is where the postcard was published.



Figure 9 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Capitola, Calif." Publisher: Scenic Art, Richmond, California Date: undated, but probably early 1960s

The shoreline in the lower picture is neither Capitola nor Santa Cruz County.



Figure 11 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Felton, California" **Publisher:** Unknown. On the reverse it says "No. 947. Landscape panel locals 20 designs." **Data:** Postmarked July 11, 1045. Felton

Date: Postmarked July 11, 1945, Felton

There are no lakes in Felton, let alone one of this magnitude. The information on the back suggests it was a stock landscape scene to which a caption was added.

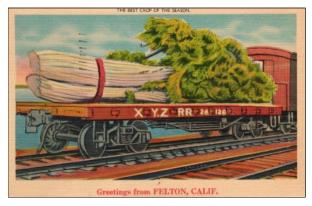


Figure 12 Postcard

Caption: "The best crop of the season; Greetings from Felton, California"

Publisher: Unknown, but on the reverse it says "No. 926 Freak Vegetables."

Date: Postmarked July 2, 1948, Mountain View, California

This postcard falls into a category known as "exaggerations." Usually they exaggerate the size of a crop grown in the area, such as apples from Watsonville. Felton was a logging town, not an agricultural town, and never produced crops of celery.

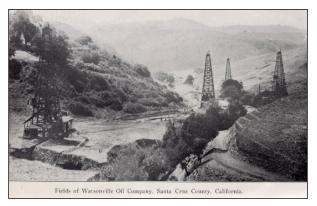


Figure 13

Image in a pamphlet titled *The City of Santa Cruz and Vicinity, California,* page 34

Caption: "Fields of Watsonville Oil Company, Santa Cruz County, California"

Publisher: The Santa Cruz Board of Trade **Date:** 1905

There was an oil boom in California in the early 1900s. Oil exploration was in its infancy, and the discovery of this natural resource in a particular county was seen as a good thing—a sign of forthcoming economic prosperity. A number of test wells were drilled in Santa Cruz County during the first half of the 1900s, but with little success. None went into production.² However, that didn't keep the Santa Cruz Board of Trade in 1905 from using a photograph from just outside the county to give the illusion that the county was an oil producer.

Although the Watsonville Oil Company had its headquarters in Watsonville, its producing wells were at the Sargent Oil Field in southern Santa Clara County, just east of the Santa Cruz County line. The text of the booklet does not actually say oil is produced within the county. It uses terms such as "in this vicinity" and "local wells." If "Santa Cruz County" in the caption is applied to the company and not the field, then it is accurate. The main point of the Board of Trade was that nearby production of fuel oil could reduce manufacturing costs for factories that might wish to locate here.



Figure 14 Postcard

Caption: "A Hold-up on the Beach at Santa Cruz, Cal." **Publisher:** Illustrated Post Card Co., 520 West 84th Street, New York, NY³ **Date:** Postmarked 1908

Images of people on the beach or boats on water that have no identifying features in the background were

not necessarily taken in Santa Cruz. While this could have been taken at Santa Cruz, there is evidence that it was not. The part of the caption that says "at Santa Cruz, Cal." looks like it was added later. This same postcard has also been published with "At Brighton Beach" in the caption. Brighton Beach is near Coney Island, not far from the publisher's location in New York.



Figure 15 Postcard

Caption: "Greetings from Santa's Village, Santa Cruz, Calif." Reverse says "Santa's Village California; Welcome House is the entrance to a child's paradise in a fairyland forest setting."

Publisher: Mike Roberts, Berkeley, Calif.

Date: Postmarked October 21. 1957, Santa Cruz, Calif.

Santa's Village was a chain of three Christmasthemed amusement parks. They were located at Skyforest near Lake Arrowhead, San Bernardino County, California; at Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz County, California; and in East Dundee, Kane County, Illinois. They opened in 1955, 1957, and 1959 respectively. The Scotts Valley park closed in the early 1980s and was demolished. The others closed for a few years but have since reopened.

Examination of photographs and brochures from the 1950s and 1960s reveals that many of the park attractions were built with the same plans and arranged in a similar fashion. This enabled the parks to share promotional materials such as postcards, which often advertised all three parks. Because the buildings were constructed to look the same at the different parks, it can be challenging to determine which of the three locations is depicted in a particular photograph.

Take for example the entrance building pictured in Figure 15. The caption says Santa Cruz, but another postcard with the same photograph (Figure 16) says Skyforest. It is the latter that is correct. Figure 17 shows the actual entrance building at Scotts Valley.

Close examination reveals that the Skyforest image shows a different arrangement of trees, and that the trees look more like pines than redwoods. The Scotts Valley building differs from the other in that it has a large window in the lower part of the right gable and a chimney on the roof at left. The "snow" trim is slightly different. The arrangement



Figure 16

of the concrete mushrooms is also different, and the candy cane has more red stripes. The uppermost sign on the candy cane is angled instead of horizontal like the one at Skyforest. A properly captioned picture of the Skyforest building appeared in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* while the local park was still under construction so as to show what it would look like when completed. It should be noted that a postcard of the East Dundee entrance building (not illustrated) shows only small trees in the background.



Figure 17

Image of Pigeon Point Lighthouse labeled "Santa Cruz"

Figure 18

Postcard (not illustrated because of copyright) **Caption:** "Santa Cruz" **Publisher:** Smith Novelty Company; Distributed by Scenic Cards, Monterey, California; SC-173

Date: Copyright 1992

The image depicts a tall white lighthouse in the distance on the left against a dark blue sky, with the ocean on the right and flowering ice plant in the foreground. There is a gold stripe around the edge of the image inset 1/4 inch with the caption in the lower right, also in gold. The postcard measures 4 x 6 inches.

The description on the back correctly identifies this as the Pigeon Point Lighthouse but the front says "Santa Cruz." This lighthouse is in San Mateo County, 35 miles north of the city of Santa Cruz. Based on their website, Smith Novelty Company no longer publishes postcards.



Figure 19

Postcard

Caption: "David A Goetz, 1600 41st Ave., Santa Cruz, California." This address is presently within the City of Capitola.

Publisher: Chevron

Date: Probably 1970, based on the color of the plate (yellow letters on blue, introduced in 1969) and the color of the sticker (orange used for 1970). This is also the approximate vintage of the Chevy Nova.

This postcard was used to send service reminders to customers of the Chevron station at the corner of 41st Avenue and Capitola Road. This particular one was sent to a Mr. Bullwinkle of Capitola to inform him that two months had passed since his Rambler was last serviced and that it was time for a "thorough safety inspection."

Was this a picture of the station at this location? Probably not. It appears to be a generic card to which Mr. Goetz's name was added. The license plate frame on the Nova says "Val Strough," which at that time was a Chevrolet dealership in Oakland.

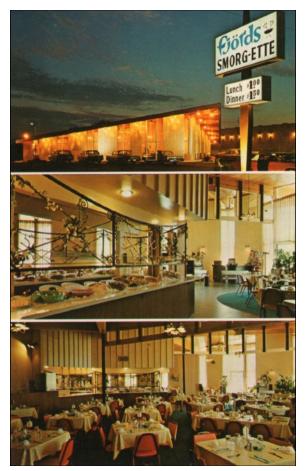


Figure 20 Postcard Caption: "Fjörds Smorg-ette"

Publisher: Jerome Studio, Ukiah, Calif. Photo by George Kuck. Printed by Henry McGrew, Kansas City, Missouri.

Date: 1960s

The description on the back says, "California's finest buffet style restaurant. Lunch \$1.00, Dinner \$1.50." The locations listed are Santa Cruz, Mt. View, San Jose (2), Ukiah, Fresno, Merced, and Bakersfield.

The one in Santa Cruz (actually Capitola) opened for business on Monday, October 4, 1965, following an open house the previous day.⁴ The owners/managers were Mr. and Mrs. Kels Guzzardo, formerly of Bakersfield.⁵

All the restaurants in this chain were built with the same design, so this postcard could be used to advertise all. If this were Capitola, the building in the background of the top photograph would be Kings Market (which later became an Orchard Supply Hardware). It does not look like Kings Market, so the top photograph was probably taken someplace else.



Figures 21 Postcard Caption: "Big Trees. Santa Cruz, Cal." Publisher: Published by Newman Postcard Company, Los Angeles

Date: Postmarked May 3, 1908, Santa Cruz. The message says, "Am going up to the Big Trees tomorrow a.m. on an automobile trip. . ."

Santa Cruz County's magnificent Coast Redwoods have attracted tourists since the late 1800s. The private "Santa Cruz Big Trees" has welcomed tourists since at least the 1870s and is today part of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. This scene, however, is not Santa Cruz County and the tree is not a redwood.

It is the famous "Hollow Tree"—a Western Red Cedar in Stanley Park, Vancouver, British Columbia. The tree, although dead, still stands and still attracts tourists who pose for photographs. Figure 22 shows a postcard with the correct caption. It appears the white area on the Santa Cruz version was strategically placed so as to obscure the original caption.



Figure 22 Postcard

Caption: "Big Tree, Stanley Park, Vancouver, B.C." Publisher: W. G. Macfarlane, Toronto and Buffalo Date: Postmarked May 8, 1909



Figure 23 Photograph

Caption: "Photographers devised ingenious ways to impress the public with the size of the giant sequoia sempervirens. This one used an entire U.S. army unit posed on the fallen giant about 1880 in San Lorenzo Valley."

Date of photograph: Late 1800s or very early 1900s

This photograph was published in 1973 in the popular book, *Santa Cruz County: Parade of the Past.*⁶ It is almost certainly not Santa Cruz County. In the first decade of the 1900s, it appeared on several postcards. One says "U.S. Cavalry on Fallen Monarch, Mariposa Big Tree Grove, California." Another says "United States Cavalry on Fallen Big Tree, Calaveras, Cal." Still another just says "U.S. Cavalry on a fallen Big Tree, California."

A similar photograph was taken with a tree called the "Fallen Monarch" at the Mariposa Grove.⁷ This tree is still there. However, it is clearly not the same cavalry unit (horses mostly dark colored instead of white) and may not even be the same tree. Mariposa's "Fallen Monarch" fell naturally, perhaps 300 years ago.⁸ The tree in this photograph looks more like it was felled for the purpose of cutting into lumber. This is based on the large amount of what appears to be logging debris in the foreground and the fact that the bark seems to have been removed. If this is the case, then the tree no longer exists.

In 2007 an original print of this photograph that sold at an auction bore the imprint of Arthur Roland Moore. Moore was a photographer in Visalia and Porterville in the late 1800s and early 1900s.⁹ Images labeled as someplace else but which were taken in Santa Cruz County number 1464 with a correct caption "Bathing in the Pacific at Capitola, California." A postcard with the Capitola caption has the postmark of July 10, 1909.



Figure 24

Stereograph

Caption: "Among the Giant Redwoods of Mariposa Grove, California"

Publisher: unknown

Date: Undated, but very early 1900s.

This tree is the "Auto Tree" at Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Its uniquely-shaped fire scar and the bark pattern clearly identify it as the Auto Tree.¹⁰ The Auto Tree was widely photographed. Although not a drive-through tree, in the early 1900s tourists would pose with their automobile parked in the tree.



Figure 25 Postcard

Caption: "Fun in the Surf; Bathing Scene near Los Angeles, California."

Publisher: Edward H. Mitchell, San Francisco, Number 1464B

Date: Undated, but circa 1910

The hotel in the distance identifies this as Capitola, which is over 300 miles north of Los Angeles. Mitchell also published the same image as

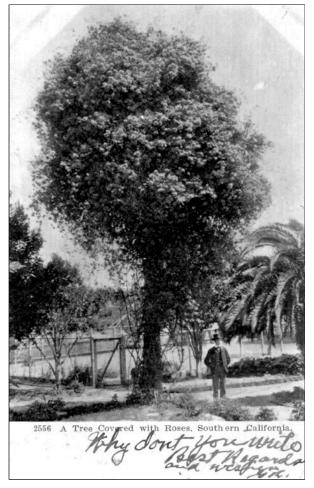


Figure 26 Postcard

Caption: "2556 A Tree Covered with Roses, Southern California"

Publisher: Oscar Newman, Los Angeles

Date: Postmarked January 12, 1908.

This giant rose grew in Frederick and Terese Hihn's Santa Cruz garden. Many different versions of this postcard were published shortly after 1900, and most credit the location as Santa Cruz. A few just say that it is in California. This one however, incorrectly says Southern California.

The photograph was taken by Santa Cruz photographer Charles Leon Aydelotte, circa 1901, and was also published in a *Sunset Magazine* article on Santa Cruz in 1902.¹¹



Figure 27

Postcard

Caption: "2553 'Jumbo' Big Tree of Southern California"

Publisher: Oscar Newman, Los Angeles

Date: Information on the back of the card indicates it was printed between 1905 and 1907. The photograph would have to date from that time frame or earlier.

"Jumbo" was the name of a redwood tree at the Santa Cruz Big Trees grove, now part of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. Besides the name on the sign, the tree can also be identified based on its shape and bark pattern. The tree derived its name from a large burl (not shown very well here) that looked like the head of P.T. Barnum's famous elephant named "Jumbo." The tree is not in "Southern California," which is defined as from San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties, south. Northern or Central California would be a better description. The tree still stands and is near the Fremont Tree on the park's Redwood Loop Trail.¹² Images taken in Santa Cruz County but not identified as to location so that they could be used generically



Figure 28 Postcard Caption: "Happy Moments in Lover's Lane" Publisher: Edward H. Mitchell, San Francisco Date: undated, but circa 1910

This postcard is an example of a Santa Cruz County image that has been made into a generic image by removal of the location. Another version of this postcard—by the same publisher—says "Happy Moments in Lover's Lane, near Capitola, Calif." With the removal of "Capitola," the postcard could be sold in other towns that had a "Lover's Lane." The publisher sold postcards throughout the West.

The photograph was taken by Santa Cruz photographer Ole Ravnos near Grand Avenue in Capitola. The location has since been eroded away by ocean waves. Images taken at a location in Santa Cruz County but incorrectly identified as another location within the county



Deborah Osterberg collection

Figure 29 Postcard

Caption: "Big Trees Park near Boulder Creek Calif."

Publisher: unknown

Date: probably 1930s or 1940s

This is another postcard of "Jumbo," located along the Redwood Loop Trail at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. This photograph appears to date from when it was a county park. The correct address is Felton, not Boulder Creek. Boulder Creek is 14 miles farther up the San Lorenzo Valley.



Figure 30 Postcard Caption: "Capitola By The Sea" Publisher: unknown

Date: undated, but postcard probably middle 1900s

This dramatic image of a wave striking a rock has a rather complicated history. It was supposedly taken by William Sherer, well known Santa Cruz photographer of the early 1900s. It appeared in several Santa Cruz County promotional pamphlets, including on the cover of one prepared for the 1939 Worlds Fair on Treasure Island.

There are offshore rocks such as this along West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz. The rock may be one of the two Seal Rocks off Lighthouse Point or one of the rocks near the foot of Woodrow Avenue. There are no offshore rocks at Capitola that would create this effect.

On July 17, 2018, Pat Hathaway, proprietor of California Views, uploaded a nearly identical photograph to his Facebook page with the caption, "Tulip Wave by A. C. Heidrick, circa 1920." His image, however, was a mirror image of Figure 30.

Heidrick was a Monterey Peninsula photographer and presumably his version of the image was sold there. Did Sherer give the image to Heidrick or did Heidrick give it to Sherer? Mr. Hathaway could provide little additional information on this, but said that Heidrick and Sherer were friends.¹³ Sherer sold his business to Al Kramer in 1937.¹⁴ On at least one occasion the image was later credited to Kramer.



Figure 31 Postcard

Caption: "From Santa Cruz - The City Beautiful" **Publisher:** P.N.C. [Pacific Novelty Co.,]. "S. C. 57 Pub. exclusively for the Carr Stationery Stores, Santa Cruz, Cal. Made in Germany"

Date: undated, but style is circa 1910

This image is not of Santa Cruz, but of the nearby town of Capitola. It is looking south along what is today Monterey Avenue toward the Hotel Capitola. The same image was also published by Charles Weidner of San Francisco. That version has the caption, "Street Scene in Capitola, Santa Cruz County, California."



Figure 32 Postcard

Captions: Front caption: "West Cliff Drive Santa Cruz Calif." Back caption: "Sea Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, California. This picturesque drive along the curving shore of Monterey Bay leads to Seacliff Beach State Park where the beach affords fine surf bathing and fishing."

Publisher: "Made by Security Lithograph Company, San Francisco 11, Calif."

Date: Undated, but probably 1950s. "San Francisco 11" would date from before zip codes were introduced in 1963.

Both the captions on this postcard are flawed. The photograph was not taken along West Cliff Drive and there is no such road as Sea Cliff Drive. The photo was taken in the Live Oak area near the foot of 18th Avenue, just east of Sunny Cove. This is near East Cliff Drive.

Acknowledgements

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All images not otherwise credited are from the author's collection.

About the Author

Frank Perry was born and raised in Santa Cruz and has long been fascinated by the region's natural features and cultural history. He is the author of eleven books and numerous articles on these subjects. From 2013 to 2021 he served as curator of the Capitola Historical Museum and during that time contributed the weekly "Focal Point" history feature to the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*.

Notes

¹ See, for example, Plate 8 in W. P. Woodring, M. N. Bramlette, and W. S W. Kew, "Geology and Paleontology of Palos Verdes Hills, California," U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 207, 1946.

² Henry G. Hubbard, "Mines and Mineral Resources of Santa Cruz County," *California Journal of Mines and Geology*, January, 1943, 50.

³ Address is from the database of postcard publishers at metropostcard.com. https://www.metropostcard.com/publishersi.html

^{4 &}quot;You are Invited to Our Open House," Santa Cruz Sentinel, October 3, 1965, 4A[28]: 5-8. (advertisement)

⁵ "Fjord's Smorgette Restaurant Opens Monday," Santa Cruz Sentinel, September 29, 1969, 6:4.

⁶ Margaret Koch, Santa Cruz County: Parade of the Past (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1973), 108.

⁷ Troop F on Fallen Monarch, Yosemite, Online Archive of California. https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt1h4nc4wj/? layout=metadata

⁸ Fallen Monarch Tree. https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/fallen-monarch-tree

 ⁹ Frank Sternad, *Charles Weidner: Photographer and Postcard Publisher* (San Francisco: San Francisco Postcard Club, undated),
 5. http://www.postcard.org/charles-weidner-postcard-publisher.pdf

¹⁰ For illustrations of the Auto Tree, see Frank Perry, "The Auto Tree," *Santa Cruz History Journal*, Number 6, 2009, 55-62.

¹¹ Frank and Jill Perry, "The Largest Rose Tree in the World, Santa Cruz," Online History Journal of Santa Cruz County, 2020, 5. https://santacruzmah-craftcms.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/Rose-Tree.pdf

¹² For more on this tree, see Frank Perry, "Dissecting Jumbo," *Online History Journal of Santa Cruz County*, January 5, 2015. https://santacruzmah-craftcms.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/Dissecting-Jumbo-formatted.pdf

¹³ Pat Hathaway to Frank Perry, personal communication, July 18, 2018.

^{14 &}quot;W. H. Sherer Has Sold His Photo Studio," Santa Cruz Sentinel, July 10, 1937, 4:1.