

# UC Santa Cruz

## Santa Cruz History

### Title

Frederick A. Hihn: Santa Cruz in the Early 1900s

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### Authors

Palmer, Darrow  
Calciano, Elizabeth Spedding  
Regional History Project, UCSC Library

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University of California, Santa Cruz

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Regional History Project

Mr. and Mrs. Darrow Palmer on Frederick A. Hihn

And

Santa Cruz in the Early 1900s

An Interview Conducted By

Elizabeth Spedding Calciano

Santa Cruz

1963

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## Introduction

The Regional History Project of the University of California, Santa Cruz was established in July, 1963, for the purpose of adding to the University Library's Archives of the History of Santa Cruz County. Chancellor Dean McHenry and Mr. Donald T. Clark, University Librarian, felt that much of historical value could be gained through the use of recorded conversations with some of the area's longtime residents.

The Chancellor and Mr. Clark decided that the Regional History Project should first concentrate on the growth and development of the county's major industries. Since the redwood industry was, in many ways, the cornerstone of the county's economic life during the period from 1875 to 1920, it was felt to be a logical starting point.

Mr. Frederick A. Hihn, 1829-1913, was one of Santa Cruz's most important pioneers. He played a major role in the development of the county's roads and railroads and founded the resort city of Capitola. He owned and developed much of the business district in the city of Santa Cruz and for many years he owned the town's waterworks. He was also Vice President of the City Bank. But in addition to these, the lumbering industry was of major importance to him for many years. He owned several large tracts of county timberland. His first lumbering, during the 1880s and early nineties, was in the Valencia area behind

Aptos. Here the Hihn Company operated the Aptos Mill, which was a good sized mill for its time. They produces all forms of building lumber and specialized in fancy pickets, boxes and mouldings. When the timber in that area gave out, Hihn moved his operations to Gold Gulch near Felton. His final lumbering, between 1904 and 1914, was behind Soquel at the Laurel Lumber Camp. Since Hihn was one of the few local men to own extensive areas of county timber and actively lumber it, he was deemed a suitable topic for the Project's first interview.

Chancellor McHenry recommended Mr. and Mrs. Darrow Palmer as an excellent couple for an interview. In their youth both Mr. and Mrs. Palmer worked for Frederick Hihn. Mr. Palmer, who is now a noted Santa Cruz contractor, began his business career as an office boy for the Hihn Company and worked there from 1909 to 1911. Mrs. Palmer was Frederick Hihn's private secretary from 1909 to 1912. Both have fond memories of the old gentleman. In fact, Mr. Palmer was most careful that nothing derogatory about Mr. Hihn should appear in this interview, for as he explained, "Mr. Hihn was always very good to us. Anything bad we might have heard about him would only be hearsay." Mrs. Palmer added the comment that she "never felt Mr. Hihn was anything he shouldn't be."

That Frederick Hihn was a warm man can easily be seen from his letters in the appendix. Mrs. Palmer note that he seemed to

take a much greater interest in his employees than was necessary or to be expected. Although he was a multi-millionaire and headed a vast complex of industries, it was typical of him that he could still find time to shop for a wedding present for his secretary. He was also a devoted family man. Mrs. Palmer recalls the many, many letters he wrote to his grandchildren.

The interview was conducted on the evening of July 24, 1963, in the living room of the Palmer's home in Pasatiempo. The quiet room with its antique furnishings formed the perfect background for a discussion of early Santa Cruz. Both Mr. and Mrs. Palmer are charming people. She is short, peppy, and delightfully witty. Mr. Palmer, who is in his early seventies now, is a slender and reflective man. Between them they have a well rounded account of Frederick A. Hihn and the early twentieth century in Santa Cruz. For those who might wish to listen to their conversation, a portion of the tape is preserved in the Regional History Project office.

Following transcription, and with some editing by the interviewer, the manuscript was returned to the Palmers for their editing and approval. The carefully checked the content, dates, and names, making certain the manuscript was accurate. Mrs. Palmer also provided the letters and newspaper clipping that are reproduced in the appendix.

This manuscript is part of a collection of interviews on the history of Santa Cruz County which have been conducted by the Regional History Project. The Project is under the administrative supervision of Donald T. Clark, University Librarian.

Elizabeth Spedding Calciano

November 11, 1963

Regional History Project

University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz



Working for Mr. F. A. Hihn

Calciano: I'm happy to have a chance to talk with you since you both knew Mr. F. A. Hihn. When did you work for him?

Mrs. Palmer: Darrow worked in the Hihn Company office for two years, 1909 to 1911, and I worked there three years, 1909 to 1912, as Mr. Hihn's secretary, stenographer, anything....

Calciano: How did you happen to work for him?

Mrs. Palmer: When I left business college I went back East to see an uncle. While I was there I got a telegram that the paper mill in Soquel wanted a bookkeeper and stenographer, so I came back and worked for them until they went broke. It was several months or so and there I was. They still owe me money! Mr. Palmer and his sister were at the Hihn Company. They came out to see me and told me about the job open there.

Mr. Palmer: I was already working there and my sister worked there for a short while.

Mr. Hihn as an Employer

Mrs. Palmer: I was with Mr. Hihn, himself.

Calciano: Yes, I was wondering how you got the position right with Mr. Hihn. That was quite a prize post.

Mrs. Palmer: His secretary was leaving.

Mr. Palmer: She was his private secretary. There were five or six bookkeepers and also an office boy. I was the office boy.

Calciano: Did you enjoy working for him?

Mr. Palmer: Very much.

Mrs. Palmer: Well, I enjoyed it, yes. I had to work and that was one of the better places in town. Most of us younger citizens felt that our education was not complete until we had training with him or worked in his office someplace.

Calciano: He really was a big employer, then?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, yes. He was the top here for hiring and having big crews. I always felt like I had been someplace, having worked for him for three years.

Calciano: Was he a good boss?

Mr. Palmer: Oh, yes, excellent. I went to work for him right out of business college. I was only seventeen - just a kid. I worked for him for two years, then quit and went to work for the County Bank. I was

nineteen when I went to work there. Then when I got old enough, she quit and we got married.

Calciano: Did you meet at Mr. Hihn's office?

Mr. Palmer: No, we met in business college.

Calciano: Was this Chestnutwood's College?

Mr. Palmer: It had been Chestnutwood's but it had been sold out to E. P. Healds. It was in the Hihn building.

Calciano: What happened to Heald's Business College?

Mr. Palmer: They eventually quit here entirely. However, Heald's Business College is still maintained in San Jose and San Francisco.

Calciano: You apparently were very young when you went to this college. Was it instead of high school?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes. In my case, we came to Santa Cruz from Illinois in 1903. My whole family came. I did housework and one lady that I worked for just insisted that I go to school.

Calciano: Had you stopped at eighth grade, then?

Mrs. Palmer: Well, no, in those days it didn't matter. We were on a farm back in Illinois. It didn't matter if you were educated or not as long as you could work! But this lady, Mrs. Hugus, was very nice and she just thought that I should keep on

going to school. I got my eighth grade diploma in the Ocean View School. Then I went on to business college.

Calciano: What did they teach you at business college?

Mrs. Palmer: They were very practical. Shorthand, bookkeeping, penmanship and spelling, commercial law and business arithmetic.

Calciano: Were you born in Santa Cruz, Mr. Palmer?

Mr. Palmer: No, I was born down in Monterey County. My folks came to California very early; my father was born in San Francisco in 1855. They were old-timers. My mother was born in Gilroy and her father worked for Miller and Lux. Henry Miller, the cattle king, was a contemporary of Mr. Hihn.

Calciano: How old were you when your family came up here?

Mr. Palmer: My two sisters and I came up here in 1908. We came to see the fleet which was going round the world at the time, and stayed to go to business college. I'm still here.

#### Mr. Hihn's Description

Calciano: Could you describe Mr. Hihn for me?

Mrs. Palmer: Mr. Hihn was in his eighties at the time we worked for him and he died about the time he was eighty four. At least I think that's right.

Calciano: Yes, he was born in 1829 and died in 1913.

Mrs. Palmer: He was a little short man. Not a big man. He was wide, though! His eighty-third birthday was a big event. The whole office crew went in and changed his office for him. They gave him new furniture, papered and painted and I don't know what all. The next day when he came and saw what all had been done he went around and kissed us all. (laughter)

Calciano: He sounds like a charming man!

Mrs. Palmer: He was really funny that day. I have to laugh every time I picture all those girls getting kissed because he wasn't given that way. The offices at that time were on Union Street; it used to be called Park Street then. They were directly across from the old Opera House. But before we worked for him, earlier in the 1900s, the offices were at Pacific and Lincoln, and they looked quite luxurious to me. I never did go inside because I wasn't working for him then.

The Hihn Home and Family

Mrs. Palmer: Mr. and Mrs. Hihn built a beautiful home where the City Hall is now.

Calciano: Was this on Locust Street?

Mrs. Palmer: It went across between Locust and Church Street.

Calciano: Were you ever in this house?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, plenty.

Calciano: Was it one of the show places?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, yes, it was a beautiful place. I'd be called to take dictation or get his notes - that is when he wanted to work at home.

Calciano: Did he do a lot of his work at home?

Mrs. Palmer: Lots of it.

Calciano: Was he a hard working man?

Mrs. Palmer: He made us work!

Calciano: He hadn't slowed down much, then.

Mrs. Palmer: No, he was sure keen on business. The house was a beautiful place, with a beautiful garden all around it. It impressed me. Trees and roses clear to the top... I thought it was wonderful.

Calciano: Did they have a lot of gardeners and maids?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh yes, they had a gardener.

Calciano: And that's where the City Hall is now?

Mrs. Palmer: It's there next to the library.

Calciano: How did it happen that the City Hall was built there?

Mrs. Palmer: I think that originally Mr. Hihn gave the property for the library. It was part of his

original holdings. After his death the city bought the Hihn home from the heirs and had it torn down to build the City Hall. The stables, where he kept his fancy horses, were right across the street where the City Auditorium is at the present time.

Calciano: Did Mr. Hihn ride to work or walk all the time?

Mrs. Palmer: Well, he didn't live very far.

Mr. Palmer: It's only a block. Of course he had a very fine carriage and several teams of driving horses. He had a man to drive them, Mr. Steiner, and a stable man to keep them clean and harnessed. That meant there were two men who worked for him all the time in the stables. There weren't any automobiles. The only one that I can remember, offhand, belonged to Mr. Wilder, a man up the coast. He had an automobile which was pretty much of a curiosity.

Calciano: Did you ever meet Mrs. Hihn?

Mrs. Palmer: (Laughter) Yes'm. One of the first times I was called to the house she came in to size up the new secretary. She looked me up and down and then she started talking to Mr. Hihn in French,

asking him all sorts of questions with I don't remember now.

Calciano: Did you understand the language?

Mrs. Palmer: Of course I did! It was real funny to me but I never let on that I knew what they were taling about.

Mr. Palmer: French is her native tongue.

Calciano: Oh, you really were brought up in it?

Mrs. Palmer: I was brought up in it until I started school.

Mr. Palmer: I believe that the Hihns talked French at home.

Mrs. Palmer: Or else she though she'd be safe in front of me.

Calciano: She was a native of France, but of German parents, so I thought they might speak German.

Mrs. Palmer: She may have been able to speak German too. I did know at one time.

Calciano: What was she like?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, a little lady. She looked very much like that nationality. When you think back more than fifty years, it's kind of hard to remember people. I knew her and I knew Kate Cope, that was one of the daughters, and Eulice Hihn was a grandson; he was shot and killed accidentally while deer hunting, when we were working for Mr. Hihn. Donald Younger's mother was Agnes, and



then there were Fred and August. August married one of the town's heirs at the time...Cooper, wasn't it? He had to do with the courthouse, and where it is now.

Calciano: Oh, yes, Cooper street. He gave the land for it.

Mrs. Palmer: and Mrs. Fred O. Hihn, that's Fred D. Hihn's mother, was a Chace from San Jose. Mr. Hihn used to write to his grandchildren. I always had to typewrite the letters. Oh, he was very much interested in his family.

Mr. Palmer: He was a very prolific letter writer.

#### Office Work

Mrs. Palmer: You know Mr. Hihn spoke several languages fluently, German and French among them, and English, and Spanish.

Calciano: Oh, he spoke them fluently?

Mrs. Palmer: Well, he wrote them! And I had to take those letters on the typewriter. Every stroke meant something. The French I could do fine because I was practically born a Frenchman. I was born in Illinois, but my folks were Swiss. But German was different. He always complimented me on my French letters, but never on the others.

Calciano: Did you type most of this, or was a lot done by hand?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, I typed. Every stroke he made was a letter. Chicken tracks! He was a great old fellow, though. Mr. Hihn did some dictating, but not as much as he wrote. He wrote reams and reams of letters in longhand. Every stroke was there, but the secretary had to know how to spell. He was a good speller, though. It was lucky for me that the only misspelled word I caught him on was "carat," not the vegetable. He spelled it "carrot" and when it was shown to him in the dictionary he said, "I don't agree with Webster."  
(laughter)

Calciano: He was evidently a very self confident man.

Mrs. Palmer: Oh my yes! You know he was a very thorough man with all his records. We'd type his letters and he'd read them over and sign them. We'd make carbon copies, of course, but that wasn't enough; we also had to make impressions in a book.

Calciano: How do you mean?

Mrs. Palmer: There you are! Maybe you can explain, Darrow. You were the office boy.

Mr. Palmer: I used to do that work. That's an old system that is never seen anymore. You have a big book that's made of tissues and the letters are written in copying ink, indelible ink. You put the letter in the book, and a tissue on top of that, and a wet piece of canvas on top of that, and a piece of oil paper, then a letter, and so on. You stacked them up and then pressed with a press, and when you opened it up the letters were all imprinted on the tissue paper. You read them through the tissue paper.

Calciano: You did this from the original that you sent out?

Mrs. Palmer: That's right.

Calciano: And you kept the carbon also?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes we filed those.

Mr. Palmer: You had to let the letter get dry before you could mail it.

Calciano: Did you have a special type of ribbon?

Mr. Palmer: Yes, a copying ribbon.

Calciano: Was this a system Mr. Hihn brought over from Germany?

Mr. Palmer: Oh no, it was done in those days. This is more than fifty years ago. They don't do it

nowadays. I don't know whether you could by a copying ribbon anymore.

Mr. Palmer: Another old custom, if ever anybody had occasion to leave the office they had to write on a slate where they were going. Of course the ladies did not leave the office. They didn't have coffee breaks in those days.

Calciano: What were your regular hours?

Mrs. Palmer: From eight to six, probably. Longer, if he could catch you. We didn't have hours in those days to speak of. We got paid by the hour though. I started at twenty-five cents per hour which was a really good wage then for women.

Calciano: I guess you worked Saturdays, too?

Mrs. Palmer: Well, yes, we always worked Saturday. All day Saturday. The only time we got a holiday would be Christmas and New Year's I guess, and the Fourth of July.

Mr. Palmer: We always got an extra check for Christmas.

Calciano: Did most of the employees of the Hihn Company work only a few years and then switch, or were there some who worked for years and years?

Mrs. Palmer: Some of them worked there all their lives. For instance, you've heard of Harvey West Park,

haven't you? Well, Harvey West's father worked at the same time we did with Mr. Hihn.

Mr. Palmer: He ran the sawmill over at Boulder Creek.

Mrs. Palmer: You know, with all his many interests Mr. Hihn had a great many employees, and for a number of years, just before our day, he entertained all the employees and families at a big Christmas party with gifts for everyone.

Calciano: But you never got to go?

Mrs. Palmer: No.

Calciano: Mr. Hihn, I notice, donated a good deal of land for the Christian Church. Was this just something extra he happened to do or did you think of him as a church-going man?

Mrs. Palmer: Well, he just had too much business to look after. He spent Sunday writing letters for me to type.

Calciano: On Monday?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, he used to get his secretaries to come and type on Sunday, too.

Calciano: My goodness! Speaking of church-going, were the people as a whole much more church-going or church-oriented than they are now?

Mr. Palmer: No, I don't think so.

Mrs. Palmer: Well, when we first came here they didn't have any shows on Sunday; the show houses were all closed on Sunday, but that's about it.

The Hihn Enterprises

Mr. palmer: When we worked for Mr. Hihn he was an old man and his two sons were in the office. The carried on a considerable amount of the business. You see, this was the business office of the F. A. Hihn Company, and one end of it was a private office for Mr. Hihn himself. He had a lot of private business that did not have to do with the company.

Calciano: He never retired then, did he?

Mrs. Palmer: No. I was trying to remember what it was that took him.

Mr. Palmer: He died about a year after she left him.

Mrs. Palmer: Not even a year.

Mr. Palmer. She quit on November the first and he died the next August. He was still active, just as active as could be when she worked for him.

Calciano: Did he ever fire employees out or anger or...

Mr. Palmer: Not anger, but he'd fire them quick enough.

Calciano: Usually for incompetence, though?

Mr. Palmer: Yes, he wouldn't let anybody run his business. He ran it himself.

Calciano: Did he have quick likes and dislikes?

Mr. Palmer: No, I don't think so. He was a fellow who was thinking of his business all the while. He had so many things to think about. He had Capitola which was a big amusement center; he had a man there, Frank Reanier, running that. He had the apple orchard, which his son Fred operated, and then all the business around town beside the business he had in San Francisco.

Capitola

Calciano: So he was still running Capitola when you were with him?

Mr. Palmer: Yes. Capitola was a big summer resort. It was crowded every summer with visitors who came on the trains or by wagons.

Calciano: Were there private houses in Capitola by them?

Mr. Palmer: Well, there was a big hotel and there were private houses, but he owned most of the property down on the flat.

Calciano: I notice that the streets were finally deeded to the city in 1937. I was wondering whether the Hihns really had owned all that till then.

Mr. Palmer: They did. They owned all of it in the area where the hotel used to be. The hotel burned, of course.

Calciano: Which hotel was this?

Mr. Palmer: The big Capitola Hotel. It was on the hillside where the theater is now.

Calciano: Some of the pictures I've seen of Capitola showed kind of a tent city. Were there tents in the area where you saw it, or were there houses and summer cabins, etc.?

Mr. Palmer: There were some pretty nice houses there. They were houses that were rented to summer people. The streetcar went down and made a loop and came back, the streetcar from Santa Cruz.

Calciano: Horse drawn or....

Mr. Palmer: No, no, that was electric. There were horse-drawn streetcars here originally, but I don't think they went that far.

#### Mr. Hihn's Early Years

Calciano: I understand Mr. hihn had very little capital when he came to Santa Cruz.

Mrs. Palmer: Well, that could be, but by the early part of this century he got to be very wealthy. He built and owned the water works for Santa Cruz, and had



connections with many lumber interests and lumberyards in the county, and many of the buildings, both residential and business were under his supervision.

Calciano: What happened to Hugo Hihn, F. A.'s brother?

Mrs. Palmer: He didn't live here when we were here.

Mr. Palmer: He owned property here, but he did not live here.

Calciano: I ask because in 1857 Mr. Hihn turned his business over to his brother Hugo because of failing health. This intrigues me since you never hear another word of Hugo, and Mr. Hihn seems to have gone on doing everything.

Mr. Palmer: What date was that?

Calciano: 1857. He was a very young fellow.

Mrs. Palmer: What time did Mr. Hihn come to Santa Cruz?

Calciano: He came in October of 1851. He and Mr. Henry Hintch were co-partners in a store they located at the junction of Front Street and Pacific Avenue. Not long after that Hintch returned to San Francisco while Hihn remained. Apparently soon after a period of depression hit the area. However, since he had a good mercantile education and was thrifty and spoke so many languages he was able to get along. He got payments in kind,

wheat and such and then would sell these. Early writings sometimes eulogize people, but this account is apparently fairly accurate. By 1857 he was worth \$30,000 and turned the business over to Hugo. After that I've not read another word of Hugo.

Mr. Palmer: The only thing I know is that the building at the corner of Front and Pacific Avenue, which wasn't know as Front Street then, but as Willow, was called the Hugo Hihn Building. That building is still there. The Teacup restaurant is upstairs. It's been sold to someone.

Mrs. Palmer: To Younger; Donald Younger's father was a lawyer. He had his office up there for years and years.

Calciano: The Younger family has been in Santa Cruz about as long as the Hihn family, haven't they?

Mr. Palmer: Well, Mrs. Younger, Donald Younger's mother, was a Hihn.

Mrs. Palmer: Yes, but the Youngers had the ranch up the coast.

Mr. Palmer: I don't think they've been here as long as the Hihns, but they were here when we came, so I know they've been here since before the early 1900s.

Mr. Palmer: I didn't realize that Hihn came to Santa Cruz way back in 1851. He was one of the first settlers here.

Calciano: Yes, he landed in San Francisco in '49 when he was twenty and set up a candy factory in Sacramento, but it was flooded out. He established a business in San Francisco and was burned out twice. He then came down here and set up a business.

Apples, Railroads, and the California Pioneers

Mrs. Palmer: Of course, he got so he owned property all around. The Hihn family owned big orchards all through the county, especially around Aptos and Valencia.

Calciano: What type of orchards?

Mr. Palmer: It was mostly apples.

Mrs. Palmer: The apples were big business. Many tons were shipped yearly to Europe.

Mr. Palmer: Mostly Liverpool, England. The local market wasn't very much in those days. I remember the Barson pear orchards; they sent their pears away too.

Calciano: How did they ship them - through the canal or across the country?

- Mrs. Palmer: It was by train in our day. Of course Mr. Hihn was instrumental in getting the railroads in and out of Santa Cruz.
- Calciano: Yes, I understand he put the narrow gauge in between Santa Cruz and Watsonville around 1875.
- Mrs. Palmer: Mr. Hihn also did a lot of business in and around San Francisco. Much correspondence went between the Hihns and some brick manufacturers there. They manufactured common brick. He had some big yards there. I was always writing or phoning for him.
- Calciano: Did Mr. Hihn participate in any activities outside of his business interests?
- Mrs. Palmer: He was very much interested in the California Pioneers Society.
- Calciano: He was one of the founders of the Santa Cruz County branch, wasn't he? He was president of it for a number of years.
- Mrs. Palmer: I think he was because important members used to come and see him at the office. While I was there J. C. Anderson from Sacramento or someplace used to come in.
- Mr. Palmer: I think Mr. Anderson was the head man of the California Pioneers.

Calciano: Did Mr. Hihn belong to any other organizations?

Mrs. Palmer: I don't know whether he belonged to anything or not, but he is buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery.

Mr. Hihn's Water Works and Real Estate Activities

Calciano: Going back to Mr. Hihn's various businesses, I know that in the earlier days Mr. Hihn supplied the water for the Santa Cruz area. Did he still do that when you knew him?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes, he had the water works.

Mr. Palmer: That was when we first knew him. He sold out later to the city.

Mrs. Palmer: The city kept growing and they had to get more water. I think they got it from elsewhere, didn't they?

Mr. Palmer: Well, eventually there were two water systems. If you lived over on the west side of town you got your water from the Hihn Company. If you lived where we used to, around Branciforte Avenue, the city supplied it. They had a big reservoir right near Pasatiempo, and the interesting thing is that they had pipes, even on Pacific Avenue, made out of redwood. Big water pipes.

Calciano: Just out in the open?

Mr. Palmer: No, buried.

Calciano: Buried! You'd think the wood would rot.

Mrs. Palmer: Redwood lasts and lasts.

Calciano: Yes, but it surprises one to know it could last under those circumstances, earth outside and water inside. But, changing the subject, I've read that in the Hihn's earlier years he did a lot of tract building - Capitola, for example. Was he still building when you were with him?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes, he was. He was building on Walnut Avenue when I was with him. I remember writing specifications for the buildings where some of those real estate offices are now. He also built the building for the Women's Decorative Art Society. They used to have fancy work of all kinds.

Mr. Palmer: You see, originally, he owned all the block from Pacific Avenue clear back to and including the old Christian Church, the Baptist Church and the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building now owned by Bert Snyder. Some of the heirs still own a considerable amount of the property along the avenue. We used to collect rent, really they

were payments, from some of the people who had bought buildings from Mr. Hihn. People didn't make very much money then. When Mr. Hihn sold them a building, house or lot it was always at a pretty good interest rate, but very little principal was involved. They'd owe the principal for years and years so it was almost like paying rent. That was a common way of doing business then. I remember there was one on Lincoln Street that we used to collect from that belonged to Zazu Pitts' mother.

Mrs. Palmer: We knew Zazu real well when she was here. She was a true comedienne. People would laugh at her even when she had a sad part.

Mr. Palmer: She was in high school when we should have been.

Mrs. Palmer: You know, to this day Darrow still works for the Hihns.

Calciano: Oh, you do?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, yes, they still have plenty of interests here.

Calciano: What do you do now?

Mr. Palmer: Well, I'm a building contractor and down through the years I've been doing work for three of the grandchildren. Especially Fred Hihn, who is the

third Fred Hihn, really. He is just my age and owns property in Santa Cruz. I've also built for Donald Younger who is a grandson, and Mrs. Benner of Berkeley, who has property in Santa Cruz. We've become good friends.

Calciano: When Mr. Hihn was around sixty he made a family corporation so to speak - the F. A. Hihn Company. Harrison, a contemporary writer, said, "As a crowning act of his business career he organized a corporation under the name of the F. A. Hihn Company, a family union, which ties together his children by mutual interest." Now this was written in 1892, just three years after the company was made. A great deal was mentioned about the emblem showing links for the children and little links for the grandchildren. I was curious as to what had happened to this.

Mr. Palmer: There is no Hihn Company as such now. When he died, so far as I know, the property was divided among the immediate children and as that generation died off, they're all gone now, it came down to the grandchildren. The Hihn grandchildren still have a lot of property in Santa Cruz. The Newbury building was built for



Mrs. Benner and Fred Hihn who owns the Woolworth store and most of the property in that block. He has his office upstairs when he is in Santa Cruz. He lives in San Francisco.

Santa Cruz in the Early 1900's

Santa Cruz Banks

Mr. Palmer: I think Mr. Hihn was also one of the organizers of the First National Bank which is now the Bank of America. The old First National Bank was situated where the Santa Cruz Savings and Loan is at the present time. That was the old Bank Building.

Mrs. Palmer: Later on they sold that to the Building and Loan and built down on the corner of Soquel and Pacific.

Calciano: Was that bank originally the City Bank?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes, originally it was the City Bank, then the First National and now Bank of America.

Calciano: Did he remain as Vice-President for quite some time or was this just one of his avocations?

Mr. Palmer: He was one of the big stockholders and was still on the board of directors when we worked for him.

Mrs. Palmer: He stayed with it as long as he was able.

Calciano: Was that the bank you were with?

Mr. Palmer: No, I was with the County Bank. I worked for William Jeter. He had been a mayor of Santa Cruz. One of the directors of that bank was B. F. Porter. Porter Sesnon, his grandson, owned the land where Cabrillo College is now. They bought it from him.

Mrs. Palmer: The Sesnon's home is Catholic now. They turned it over to the Catholics near Cabrillo.

Mr. Palmer: Mrs. Sesnon, that is the lad's mother, was a Porter and that's called Porter Gulch.

Calciano: What was it like in the bank when you worked there?

Mr. Palmer: Oh, we had a lot of fun. There were just about five of us running the whole thing. I think they have 125 people working there now.

Calciano: So it took only five of you to run it?

Mr. Palmer: Yes. Mr. Jeter, he was Lieutenant Governor of California before we knew him, and Mr. Frank Hoffman, and U. M. Thompson, Hugh Leonard, and myself.

Calciano: Were you a teller?

Mr. Palmer: Well, I got to be a teller after a while. I was a bookkeeper . . .

Mrs. Palmer: Carpenter, any old thing they wanted done.

Calciano: How did they clear the checks from other banks? Everything is so automated now with IBM numbers, central clearing houses, etc. What happened back then if somebody wrote a check on a Boston bank?

Mr. Palmer: If we got a check on a Boston bank my job was to write the remittance. I copied by hand the maker and payee, the amount, the date and what bank it was drawn on, and the last endorser. I would make that up and send it to our correspondent in the appropriate city. In that case it would have been the First National Bank in New York. They cleared our Boston checks. The check in town were taken to the different banks. There were three banks and we exchanged checks every day.

Calciano: Did you just run across the street?

Mr. Palmer: Yes, and out-of-town checks were mailed. Instead of writing all this stuff now, of course it just goes through the machine bang bang bang bang bang. A little picture, about the size of a postage stamp is taken of both sides of the check. It's microfilm. I was the chief bookkeeper when I left the bank. I could have been there yet, I guess.

Calciano: Did the bank ever change its name?

Mr. Palmer: They've changed their name in this respect; when I was working for them they were a national bank, the County First National Bank, but they found out that a national bank couldn't have branches. Since they wanted to have branches they went back to a state charter.

Soquel Paper Mill

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, a lot of interesting things have happened in this old county. To think that we used to have a good big paper mill here, and I was the finish of it!

Calciano: Just what happened to the paper mill?

Mrs. Palmer: It went broke.

Calciano: Not enough demand?

Mrs. Palmer: I don't know. All I do know was that it was a new company that had come here and taken over when I came here to work for them.

Calciano: What was the original paper company, then?

Mrs. Palmer: South Coast Paper Mills.

Mr. Palmer: The present Soquel High School is built right in the area where the paper mill was.

Mrs. Palmer: There is a Paper Mill Road in Soquel. The paper mill was right on that Soquel Creek.

Calciano: Did it use the pulp and so forth from the lumber companies?

Mrs. Palmer: The short time that it was there they got bales and bales of old papers and also, I think, pulp. But I wasn't there too long and they were mostly always promoting.

Mr. Palmer: It was a stock-selling scheme.

Mrs. Palmer: From Canada. I boarded that year with a Mrs. Swann at the Daubenbis place, right across from the Soquel theater. That house was built way back, in 1850 I think. You won't mistake it if you come through Soquel.

Calciano: Is it still there?

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, yes. It's still quite nice looking for an old place.

Calciano: What about the Daubenbis family?

Mr. Palmer: There's still some of them left.

Mrs. Palmer: Mrs. Thorpe is a granddaughter, or great granddaughter.

Mr. Palmer: She's a woman in her sixties.

Calciano: I have found it a problem, sometimes, to located older houses and buildings in Santa Cruz because the numbers are entirely different now from the

ones I find given in older books. When were they switched?

Mr. Palmer: The numbers have been switched twice. The last time was about ten years ago when they reversed the numbers on Pacific Avenue.

Calciano: Oh, no!

Mr. Palmer: Number one used to start at the Post Office and now it begins at the beach, so the numbers don't mean anything to you.

Calciano: Has this happened to other streets in Santa Cruz?

Mr. Palmer: Oh yes, They've renumbered all of them.

Calciano: Why did they do it?

Mr. Palmer: Oh, the City Planners. They have to have something to do.

Calciano: It's very confusing!

Mrs. Palmer: You know in those good old days you really lived. I don't know how to express it. You walked everywhere you went, unless you went on the streetcar, bicycle, or with a horse and buggy. You didn't go so far as you do now. I lived not far from the Hihn office, with an old lady, Mrs. Matilda Longley, who was an old-timer. She was the first white baby born in this part of the country. In Soquel, I believe.

Calciano: What was her maiden name?

Mrs. Palmer: Hecox.

Calciano: Oh, Abner Hecox!

Mrs. Palmer: Her father and her brother were named that. Her father was the lighthouse keeper.

Calciano: It was her sister that kept the lighthouse after her father?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes.

Calciano: Well, now, were things like you groceries delivered by the grocery store?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes, they came and took orders. They came around with their horse and buggy to take the orders and then later they would deliver them. Oh, they did that after we were married.

Pogonip, Pasatiempo, and Marion Hollins

Calciano: A place that looks as if it were part of the "good old days" is the Pogonip Club. Is there some history there?

Mrs. Palmer: Pogonip was the first golf course here.

Calciano: What happened to it?

Mrs. Palmer: Well, when Marion Hollins came she built Pasatiempo which was much better.

Calciano: When did Pogonip come?

Mrs. Palmer: Pgonip was started around 1911 or 12 because I remember that Darrow and I and the girls used to go up there and take long walks.

Mr. Palmer: I'm no sure who owned the property.

Mrs. Palmer: McCormicks, I believe.

Mr. Palmer: The Southern Pacific Man?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes.

Calciano: Was it made for people from San Francisco, or for local people?

Mr. Palmer: Local people mostly. We got interested here (Pasatiempo) through working for Miss Hollins. You're not a golfer?

Calciano: No.

Mr. Palmer: Marion Hollins was the Women's Champion one year. She's not an old timer here. She didn't show up until 1927 or 8.

Mrs. Palmer: She had made a great deal of money in oil. Down at Kettleman Hills. Where we live now used to be an old family place; all this area was the Billings property. But Miss Hollins bought the property from them in about 1926 or so and developed it into a golf course.

Calciano: Did she break this land up into lots?



Mr. Palmer: Yes, she bought this in 1926 or '27 and had the roads built and the golf course laid out and lots for sale, but of course she didn't sell any because that was just about the time of the great crash. Poor Miss Hollins lost all her money. The area was taken over by Mr. Cecil Baker and then finally by Mr. Lansdale and some of the property owners here. Now the lots are all sold; only a few are left - over in the woods.

Mrs. Palmer: Miss Hollins used to go horseback riding. She used to have hose races of sort over here on Graham Hill.

Mr. Palmer: Yes, steeple chase.

Mrs. Palmer: Then she bought a dairy up in Scotts Valley. She died about twenty years ago, I guess.

Mr. Palmer: She had a nice ranch up in Scotts Valley. All together about 400 acres. We built her some stable for race horses on the property that is now Santa's Village. She came here from Monterey. She had worked with Samuel F. B. Morse, the Del Monte properties man who had the Del Monte Golf Course. That's where she did a lot of her golf playing. After she got this place operating she had a lot of famous golgers

here. Bobby Jones was here and I think that Walter Hagan was here at one time, and Byron Nelson.

### Dairying

Calciano: Your mention of Miss Hollins buying a dairy farm reminded me that there seems to have been a lot of dairy farms in Santa Cruz County at the turn of the century. Whatever happened to them?

Mr. Palmer: A lot of the from part of the land up the coast has been rented to the artichoke and sprout growers. Towards the back, away from the ocean, cattle are raised, but no dairy cattle.

Calciano: It was mostly Swiss-Italians that ran the dairies, wasn't it?

Mr. Palmer: Yes, it was. That was all Swiss-Italian up the coast, pretty much all. When it got so that the land was more profitable to rent for sprouts and gardening, then some of them moved to Scotts Valley with their herds.

Mrs. Palmer: A big event along the coast was when the cement plant came to Davenport in 1905.

Calciano: Did Hihn have anything to do with the cement plant?

Mrs. Palmer: No.

Calciano: I was wondering, since he seemed to have a finger in every pie.

Mr. Palmer: As far as I know, he didn't have any interests up the coast. His interests were in the mountains towards Watsonville and Valencia, Capitola and in Santa Cruz.

Calciano: Another thing that intrigues me, as I read about in the area north of Santa Cruz in various old books, is all the camping that apparently went on.

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, yes. And they stayed longer than now.

Mr. Palmer: Well, in those days they'd come over from the valley in wagons - automobiles weren't though of - and they'd stay here all summer. Even as late as when I first came here, there were only three or four automobiles.

Calciano: Was Santa Cruz later in getting them than some of the Eastern cities?

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Wilder, the dairyman, got the first one in 1901. It was a one cylinder Knox.

Mrs. Palmer: Oh, there were a few around, but no too many.

#### Water Carnivals

Calciano: Did they have Venetian Water Carnivals when you were here?

Mrs. Palmer: Yes, I don't know whether they called them Venetian, but they had water carnivals.

Calciano: What happened to them?

Mr. Palmer: Well, they were started long before we came here, but they had two or three of them after we were here. They were always down on the river where they would have floats which, instead of being in the streets, would be on boats on the river.

Calciano: Which river is this?

Mr. Palmer: They San Lorenzo. They also had shows and a regular carnival.

Calciano: Was it a big tourist attraction?

Mr. Palmer: Well, yes, but it was pretty much an attraction for the home folks too. The big tourist attraction was the beach in those days.

Calciano: Did the war end these water carnivals?

Mr. Palmer: I think the last water carnival was probably 1912 or 13; they never had another one.

Calciano: You don't know why, though?

Mrs. Palmer: I don't know whether it was lack of interest, or whether they started something else. They started the beauty pageant in the '20s.

Mr. Palmer: Water carnivals are things of the past. They've tried it a bit in Capitola, but they don't do it here anymore.

The River Street Tannery

Calciano: I have been wondering about the old San Lorenzo Tannery that belonged to the Kron family. Is that the one that is out on River Street now? The Salz Tannery?

Mr. Palmer: Yes, Mr. Norman Lezin, the son-in-law of Mr. Salz, is the present owner.

Calciano: Do you know how it traces back to the Kron's?

Mr. Palmer: A Mr. Kirby was the original owner, but I didn't know him. However, when I worked at the County Bank one of the Krons was a director of the bank. He was the owner of the tannery at that time. That's a very old tannery; I guess it must be 100 years old. I believe Mr. Kron sold it to Mr. Kuhlmann and Mr. Salz. The wife of Mr. Lezin, the gentleman who owns it now, is Mr. Salz's daughter.

Calciano: It's still quite a thriving tannery, isn't it?

Mr. Palmer: Oh, yes. Originally they tanned California saddle leather which is a fine leather used

mostly for luggage and things of that nature.

But in the last two years they have changed over.

Calciano: Is the saddle leather made out of cowhides?

Mr. Palmer: Yes. They still make California saddle leather but now they make a lot of shoe leather which is a cheaper grade of leather and much more competitive. The California saddle leather is just about the highest grade of leather there is. Beautiful stuff.

Calciano: Where do they get the hides?

Mr. Palmer: They buy them all over the country. I think some from South America at times.

Calciano: Do they still get tan bark out of the woods, or do they use chemicals?

Mr. Palmer: They use chemicals now. It's the cheaper thing to do.

Calciano: How was the tan bark used?

Mr. Palmer: It's all ground up, liquefied, and used for tanning. They've changed over their method of tanning a good deal in the last two years. Instead of tan bark they use chemicals; instead of scraping the hair off the hides, they take it off with chemicals. It's a very interesting thing. Once you get used to the smell, you kind

of like it. The processes they go through are quite remarkable.

Calciano: It sounds like an unusual and fascinating industry. I've been very interested in all that you've been able to tell me about it. I want to thank both you and Mrs. Palmer for your comments on Mr. Hihn and early Santa Cruz life in general. You've certainly given me a lot of information to work with.

Trans: E. Calciano

Typed: A. Sanders

Digitized: TriAxial Data Systems

Appendices



*My Dear Co-Workers  
In the Santa Cruz Office*

*My surprise and joy to be remembered by you so handsomely on the occasion of my 81st birthday was indeed great.*

*The lamp you so kindly presented me with, is certainly very beautiful and most useful, but bright as it shines, the thought of your kind remembrance, note and cheerful looks shine still brighter, and will never be extinguished.*

*My Dear Friends: May many be the days, weeks, months, yea years, that I may enjoy working with you, and many the joys of your life, and should there be any shadows, may they prove blessings in disguise.*

*With hearty thanks for your kind thoughts and deed, I remain*

*Sincerely yours,*

*F. A. Hillman*

*Santa Cruz, Aug. 16, 1910*

Santa Cruz, California,

November 5, 1912

Mrs. Darrow Palmer,

Argonaut Hotel, -44-4<sup>th</sup> St.,

San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Mrs. Palmer:-

It gives me great pleasure to tender you and Mr. Palmer my heartiest congratulations and good wishes to your marriage. May many be the years of you mutual felicity.

I intended to select a wedding present last Friday or Saturday, but had too many calls.

When on Monday I inquired for your address I was told that you were married Sunday Evening and had gone no one knew where. I had intended to ask you to help me to select a dresser. You being gone I went to the Pacific Coast Furniture Co. Store, and Mr. Littlefield showed me a number of oak and other wood dressers, two of which I liked best. \$35.00 was the price made to me, which I presume means 10% off the regular price. As you are to use this dresser, please go and select it for me. Should you find something you like better, take it instead.

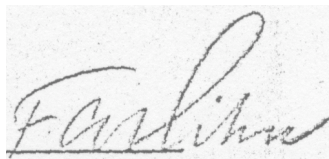
Let me tell you what I have been thinking about. At the election yesterday I spoke to a number of women; they all seemed to take as much interest in the election as the men did, and I

feel quite sure it was a mistake not to have let them vote until now. Women being placed thus on a par with man, should they not also be equal to men in business or other pursuits in life.

Of course they should marry and have a home and raising a family and all that, but why should marriage separate your relations with me, and thereby create a void. Just because "they all do it."

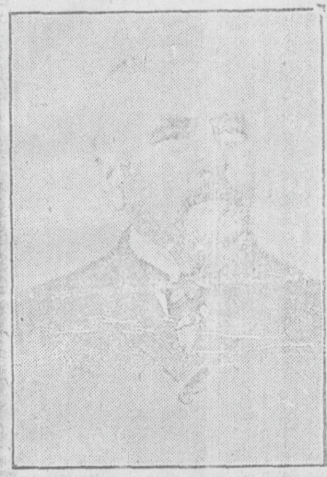
Sincerely yours,

FAH:MR

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. A. H. M. R.", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.



# F. A. HIHN IS DEAD



F. A. HIHN.

F. A. Hihn, the well-known Santa Cruz capitalist, died at his home on Locust street at 3.30 o'clock this afternoon of pneumonia. Mr. Hihn was eighty-four years old one week ago today.

Many a rare 'old battle has F. A. Hihn fought with the destroyer and each time he emerged a smiling winner.

But it was noted at his eighty-fourth birthday anniversary a week ago today that he had lost hope of ever having his children and grandchildren about him at another such gathering. Though he had been ill for some time he became worse that night and pneumonia developed. This was the immediate cause of death.

Frederick A. Hihn was born on the 16th day of August, 1829, at Holzmin-den, Duchy of Brunswick, Germany. He was one of a family of seven.

He was educated in his native town and graduated from its high school.

In April, 1849, he sailed for California, attracted by the reports of the discovery of gold.

He reached San Francisco in October, 1849, and for a time worked in the mines.

He became a hotel proprietor at Sacramento, but quit it after the fire of 1851, coming to Santa Cruz in October of that year.

Having knowledge of several languages Mr. Hihn built up a large mercantile business here.

In November, 1853, he married Miss Therese Paggen, a native of France, of German parents. The issue of this marriage was Kate C., Louis W., August C., Fred O., Theresa and Agnes.

In 1857 he made his family home on Locust street, where he died today.

Soon after arriving in Santa Cruz Mr. Hihn devoted himself to real estate and other investments and his properties extend all over the county and take many forms. He was rated a multimillionaire.

He assisted in the organization of the City bank and First National; he owned Capitola, owned the Hihn water system; owned great business frontage on Pacific avenue; and was interested in many milling enterprises.

With the advance of years he lost none of the clarity of mind which distinguished his early life and was in many respects the most remarkable man this section of California had produced.