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LOCAL HISTORY

Ending up in the wrong war

By Ross Eric Gibson

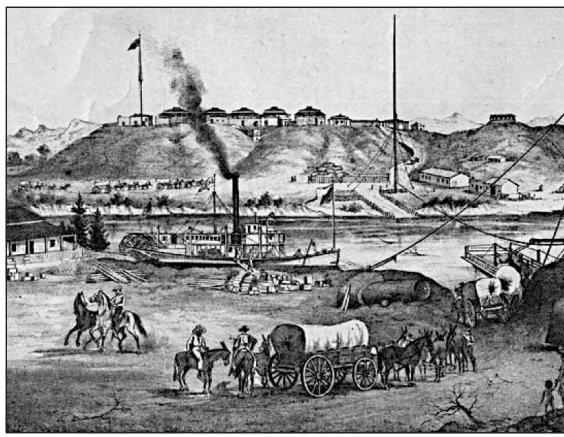
This is the Civil War story of three Santa Cruzans who endured "dragon's teeth" when they ended up in a war they hadn't signed up for.

California skipped a territorial phase, and declared itself a state in 1850 to prevent Southerners from creating a slave state out of Southern California. This didn't prevent Southern settlers from proposing in 1855 to split California, which failed.

But in 1859, the bill to split California was guided through the state and national governments by Sen. Milton Latham (once California's governor), and nearly succeeded. Then on Nov. 6, 1860, the election of Abraham Lincoln triggered the secessionist crisis, as 11 states seceded between Dec. 20, 1860 and June 8, 1861. Confederates left so quickly and defiantly, that there were not enough Southerners left in the U.S. Capitol to partition a slave state from California.

The firing on Fort Sumpter April 12, 1861 sparked the Civil War, causing soldiers to resign that wanted to join the opposing army. This led to recruitment drives across the country, North and South. The Los Angeles Mounted Riflemen were formed among California Counties with high populations of Southern Democrats, to back Confederate Secession for part-or-most of California. Union supporters realized California's biggest threat was the abandoned Butterfield

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Fort Yuma in California was across the Colorado River from Yuma, Arizona, and the entry point to California.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Food Bank offers help with CalFresh applications



COURTESY SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Guillermina Rivera, communications manager at the Watsonville Community Action Board, presenting at the CalFresh Forum.

By Tara Fatemi Walker

Did you know that CalFresh, also known as EBT/SNAP, is available to a wide range of individuals — including those with and without kids, and those who have previously applied and been denied? And that Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County has staff devoted to helping people apply, at no charge? The Food Bank also hosts an annual forum dedicated to CalFresh. Given that May is CalFresh Awareness month, it's the perfect time to explore how CalFresh and the Food Bank help nourish the local community.

Because of assistance from Second Harvest case specialist Marisol Cisneros-Lopez, 36-year-old Santa Cruz County resident Yesenia Hernandez receives monthly CalFresh bene-

fits, which increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables she can buy for her family.

"Now that everything is so expensive, this has helped me a lot," says Hernandez. "I came with my husband (from Michoacán, Mexico) for a greater opportunity."

In recent years the family — which includes two kids, both born here — has struggled to make ends meet. Hernandez previously applied to CalFresh but never heard back. Then her aunt mentioned that Cisneros-Lopez had helped her apply successfully. During a visit to Starlight Elementary for its twice-monthly Food Bank food distribution, Hernandez met Cisneros-Lopez and had a positive experience. "Marisol signed me up and the process was quick." Since then, Hernandez has referred other relatives to Second

Harvest who have also signed up through the nonprofit's CalFresh Team, which includes Cisneros-Lopez and three other case specialists, plus case specialist manager Rosa Quezada.

Cisneros-Lopez is glad she was able to make a difference in Hernandez's life, "especially knowing that she had two little ones who depend on her. I was able to gain her trust and assist her with the application. Sometimes obtaining trust from a client can be difficult." This is due to the myths associated with CalFresh. "For example, many believe applying for CalFresh will negatively affect them when applying for citizenship. Another untrue myth: if people enroll in CalFresh they are taking benefits from someone else who may need it." Also, that if you apply once and are denied you cannot apply again. "If there

are any income changes, loss of a job, or reduction of work hours individuals are more than welcome to re-apply because these are circumstances where CalFresh can be of immense help," adds Cisneros-Lopez.

Second Harvest's team does outreach work about CalFresh applications across Santa Cruz County. "We also try to provide the community with other local resources during outreach," explains Cisneros-Lopez. "For example, if they have questions about CalWORKs or housing, we provide our hotline 831-662-0991 and our hotline coordinator can give them information."

Overseeing the case specialist team, Rosa Quezada leads efforts to increase CalFresh participation in the community through education and direct aid. "We build trust-

CALFRESH » PAGE 4

NAME DROPPING

Education office honors their local educators

Santa Cruz Sentinel

The Santa Cruz County Office of Education recently announced the recipients of the 2024 Santa Cruz County Educator of the Year Awards, according to a release from the office. The honors recognize educators from across Santa Cruz County who embody the values of our school community.

Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools Faris Sabbah and the Santa Cruz County Board of Education recognized this year's award recipients at the County Board of Education meeting on May 16.

"Each of these outstanding honorees has shown unwavering dedication and support for students' success, both in and out of the classroom," said Sabbah in a statement. "It is a privilege to recognize these exemplary educators and partners whose knowledge, passion, and values serve as a source of inspiration for our entire school community."

- The 2024 honorees:
- Teacher of the Year: Russell Bryan Love, lead teacher, New School Community Day School, Pajaro Valley Unified School District.
 - Classified Employee of the Year: Jennifer Konicke, After School Program Coordinator and classroom aide, Pacific Elementary School, Pacific Elementary School District.
 - Counselor of the Year: Soledad Hess, Social Emotional Counselor, Mission Hill Middle School, Santa Cruz City Schools.
 - Administrator of the Year: Cristal Renteria, director of Alternative Education, Santa Cruz County Office of Education.
 - Community Partner of the Year: Woodstock's Pizza Santa Cruz.

Merger announced

West Coast Community Bancorp, the holding company for Santa Cruz County Bank, and 1st Capital Bancorp, the holding company for 1st Capital Bank, jointly announced that they have entered into an agreement and plan of reorganization and merger.

The all-stock transaction is valued at approximately \$63 million, or \$10.78 per FISB share, based on the closing price of \$29.94 for West Coast Community Bancorp shares on May 20.

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