

## Introduction

The Regional History Project conducted a series of interviews from 2001 to 2002 with Harold A. Hyde, Watsonville businessman, distinguished community member, and UCSC's founding Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance, documenting his recollections of Santa Cruz County history and the establishing of UC Santa Cruz.

Hyde, who was born in Watsonville in 1923, begins his narration with the story of his early life and family history. He was part of a large, extended pioneering family that had settled in both north and south Santa Cruz County, and in northern California, in the late 1840s and numbers among his forebears members of the Bliss, Anthony, Bennett, and Treat families. His father, Harold Anthony Hyde, died when he was a young child after which his mother, young Hal, and his grandmother moved to Berkeley where he grew up among many UC Berkeley faculty families. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, however, he maintained strong ties with his Santa Cruz family members and friends.

In the first part of the memoir Hyde focuses on his education, military service, and early professional life. He graduated from UC Berkeley in 1947 after serving in the army during World War II. In 1948 he married Persis Horner (of San Francisco, and also a UC Berkeley graduate) and in 1949 received his M.B.A. from the Harvard Business School. He worked for several years in San Francisco at the Emporium Department Store, participating in its expansion during the post-war transformation in retail merchandising. He moved back to Watsonville in 1951 where he headed Ford's Department Store, a venerable institution founded in the 1850s, and oversaw the store's modernization and expansion.

As a Santa Cruz native and singularly civic-minded member of the community, his recollections illuminate various aspects of county history from the 1930s to the present. Sprinkled throughout the manuscript is a veritable Who's Who of county and northern California families, institutions, and individuals with whom he has crossed paths.

Hyde has a unique vantage point in describing local and regional history because of his extensive family, business, and political connections, his many social, cultural, and charitable affiliations, and his wide acquaintanceship with the county's diverse ethnic communities. He describes Watsonville's evolution from the Great Depression on, including a detailed overview of Pajaro Valley agriculture, the role of the H.A. Hyde Company nursery and growers, the area's shifting crop bases, and developments in horticulture and strawberry growing. Hyde's thoughtful commentary on the historical cleavage between south and north county—the rural, agricultural Pajaro Valley and the formerly tourist-based economy of Santa Cruz—is informed by his encompassing knowledge of the region's geography, ethnic populations, and economies.

Hyde was deeply involved in the founding of both of the county's two institutions of higher public education—Cabrillo Community College and the University of California, Santa Cruz. He was instrumental in establishing a community college district here and

served from 1959 until 1981 as a founding trustee of Cabrillo College. He helped to select the site for the college and worked to mount programs serving the vocational needs of local students and the county's economy as well as preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. His commentary addresses Cabrillo's distinction as an academic institution and its influence in uniting the south and north county in an important common endeavor. He also discusses the role of California's community colleges in light of the state's three-tiered Master Plan for Higher Education.

Hyde participated, along with many local UC alumni and community leaders, in promoting Santa Cruz as the site for the University of California campus here. Founding UCSC Chancellor Dean E. McHenry appointed him as the campus's founding Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance in 1964 where he served until 1975. Of all of McHenry's early appointments no one was as embedded in and as knowledgeable about the Santa Cruz community as Hyde which was very important in cementing town/gown relations across the board.

"It was a heady time of building a vibrant human community," he wrote. In those early days, both before the first group of students arrived, and afterwards, the campus administration was small, numbering perhaps two dozen (excluding academic program heads and college provosts). Each administrator had many irons in the fire, especially Hyde, whose overview of the campus's evolution touches on the myriad details of physical planning, academic developments, and the building of Santa Cruz's unique college system.

He was a member of the core group who oversaw campus construction, selected the faculty and staff, and dealt with the nitty-gritty details of fire prevention, public safety, the establishment of a campus police force, water, power, landscape and tree protection, and road building.

He says of his tenure that he ". . . had dealings with the total campus organization." His portfolio seems to have vastly exceeded his actual job description; he humorously recounts that he was one of the few designated during campus construction—in Chancellor McHenry's absence—to sign off on cutting down any tree over six inches in diameter. This was a special, well-known McHenry policy derived from his reverence for the extraordinary 2000-acre site and the guiding philosophy of campus landscape architect Thomas Church. Hyde describes how Church's vision influenced campus architecture and the siting of the colleges and various buildings.

Hyde's narration encompasses most of the developments of the young campus during its first decade, including his recollections of academic planning, the spirited social activities in the early colleges, the emergence of affirmative action, profiles of the early campus-builders, the origins of the Farm and Garden Project under the leadership of Alan Chadwick, and town/gown relations during the turbulent 1960s. He also assesses McHenry's legacy as founding UCSC chancellor, UCSC's uniqueness within the UC system, and his relationships with subsequent chancellors.

Hyde discusses his many abiding community activities which highlight the county's changing cultural environment during the last half century. He was founding president of the Santa Cruz Cultural Council; founding president of UCSC's Arboretum Associates; and founding treasurer of the UC Santa Cruz Foundation. He also talks about his interest in and contributions to the University Library's Special Collections.

During these interviews his wife, Persis Horner Hyde, known as "Perky," died on June 15, 2001. He describes in moving detail what he characterized as a "team partnership marriage" of over half a century with this remarkable and socially engaged woman, who was strongly supportive of Hyde's participation in this oral history project.

The tape-recordings were transcribed verbatim and edited for continuity and clarity. Hyde was meticulous in his preparation for these interviews; each week I would provide him with a questionnaire listing the topics to be covered in the next interview and he arrived at my office with sheafs of handwritten pages. He went through his transcript line-by-line, correcting proper names and offering many suggestions which clarified the manuscript. Any misspellings, however, I am responsible for. Copies of this volume are in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; and in Special Collections, University of California, Santa Cruz. This manuscript is one in a collection of interviews on the history of Santa Cruz County and the UCSC campus conducted by the Regional History Project. The Project is supported administratively by Christine Bunting, head of Collection Planning, and University Librarian Allan J. Dyson.

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Regional History Project

McHenry Library

University of California, Santa Cruz