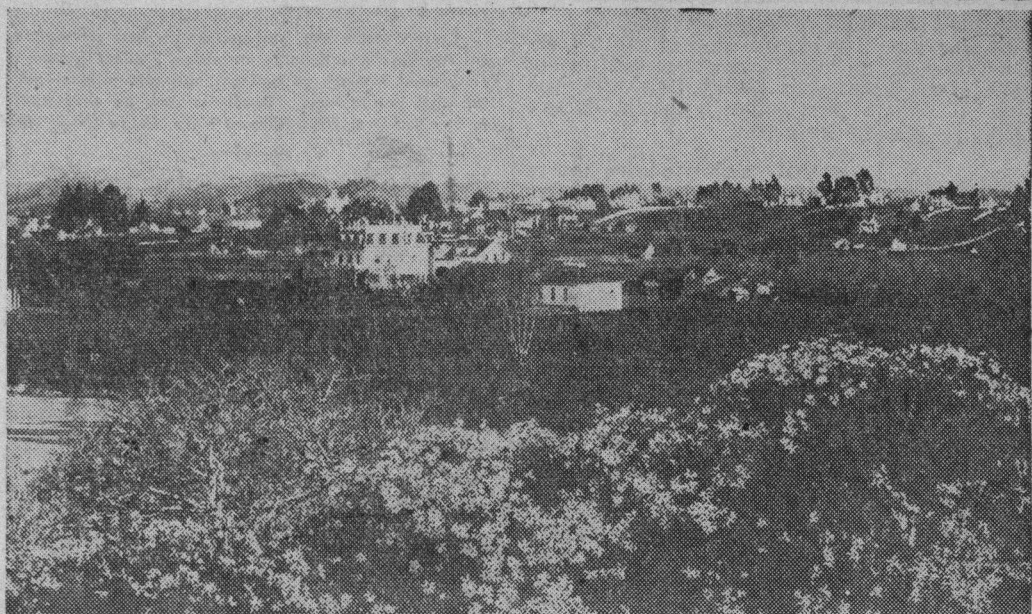


SANTA CRUZ YESTERDAYS



"ACROSS THE RIVER" SEVENTY YEARS AGO

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Although the picture was probably taken because of a surprisingly large mantle of snow along the higher elevations of the background mountains, it is now of extra interest as a reminder that today's Santa Cruz is NOT as full of wide open spaces as it used to be.

Several of the buildings visible 70 years ago from this Beach Hill vantage point on "Rennie's Hill" at the top of Cliff street, are still standing and one was torn down a little more than a year ago.

Close inspection of the scene reveals the original version of Branciforte school (then on the Soquel avenue hill where the hospital is now). In 1894 a four-room section, plus principal's office and new bell tower, was added to the front of the older part, both being two-story.

For ten years or so the development of Alfred (Fred) Barson's already popular Riverside Hotel and orchards in the lower foreground, had been going on. The eastern portion of the orchards are well along.

Fertile Acres

A fenced center section of newer trees seems to be developing about where the Barsons in 1888 deeded to the city enough land to cut a street bisecting the orchard but making a direct route from the East Side to the beach. This connected Barson street with the then new "cut-bias" bridge and lower Riverside avenue.

The mass of foreground wildflowers and the top of a large tree at the bottom of the hill almost completely obliterate the famous and majestic bend of the river which was destined to achieve rare distinction a decade later as scene of the center of Venetian Water Carnival activity. Evidently the greater part of the western section of orchards were developed in the later years.

Campbell street, starting at Broadway, did not at that time run through to Barson, the remaining third being traversable only by a foot path. However, it lined up directly with the new part of Riverside.

International Renown

The fame of the wondrous and fertile river acres of the Barson orchard was widespread for many years. Greater portion of the orchard was in pears—the very finest DeComice and Clairgeau—which carried the name and fame of the Barsons of Riverside Hotel eastward and across the seas.

In the far distance, to the left of the school on the hill, the pio-

neer Bausch Brewery building is visible, then standing at the northwest corner of Soquel avenue and Ocean street. When it was built, about a hundred years ago, it stood at the eastern city limits of Santa Cruz. All beyond was Branciforte, or the East Side.

It was here, at the Vienna Gardens along Branciforte creek, adjacent to the old brewery, that in the beginning of the 1880's, early forms of vaudeville entertainment was offered. There was a theater stage and also a dance pavilion.