

11-26-50
040, Ernest

Old Santa Cruz

● ● ● By Ernest Otto

Perhaps as old as the bulkhead which is now Bulkhead street was one built along the north bank of the river just below what is today's Bixby street.

The bulkhead which is now a street was erected in 1862 after the torrential rains of the preceding winter had sent flood water swirling over the flat.

The piling and planking which protected the river bank further downstream still has remnants showing.

Bixby street did not exist then, nor did Pearl and Jessie. The region was all in orchards. W. T. Cope and A. A. Taylor were interested in the subdivision there. It was frequently overflowed then but now has protection from a levee.

The latest protection from the river in that vicinity is the levee built along Riverside Manor tract, practically from Bixby street around the curve to Broadway.

The backwater slough under the Ocean Villa bridge has been gradually filled.

On the opposite side of the river are remains of a bulkhead which starts just below the Riverside avenue bridge and goes as far as the Lee-Bert apartments. Most of the old pilings remain but little of the planking. When it was built there were back of it the orchards of the Uhden and Leibbrandt farms.

Laurel Street Fill

Another long fill was made when Laurel street extension became a part of the city street system, providing a quicker way from Pacific avenue to the beach. A lot of the hillside of the William Rennie property was denuded of trees and the chalk rock used for the fill around as far as Third street.

The same fill ended the existence of the old Rennie's swimming pool and the slough that reached over to Pacific avenue.

When Santa Cruz started its Venetian Carnivals this part of the river, with the curved bulkhead, furnished a place for tribunes with thousands of seats. Boxes bordered the top of the esplanade. Tall poles placed in the river and on canopies over the seats bore thousands of electric lights.

Gondoliers Rowed Barge

In the center of the stream was a large stand for the Ronconvieri band from San Francisco. The Venetian barge bearing Queen Anita (Anita Gonzales) and her attendants was moved up and down stream by gondoliers.

At Pacific and Laurel a large pavilion built for the queen's grand ball was decorated with the carnival colors of white and gold.

FIRE AT HOBERG'S

Napa, Calif., Nov. 25 (AP)—Fire